MEMORIALS

OF

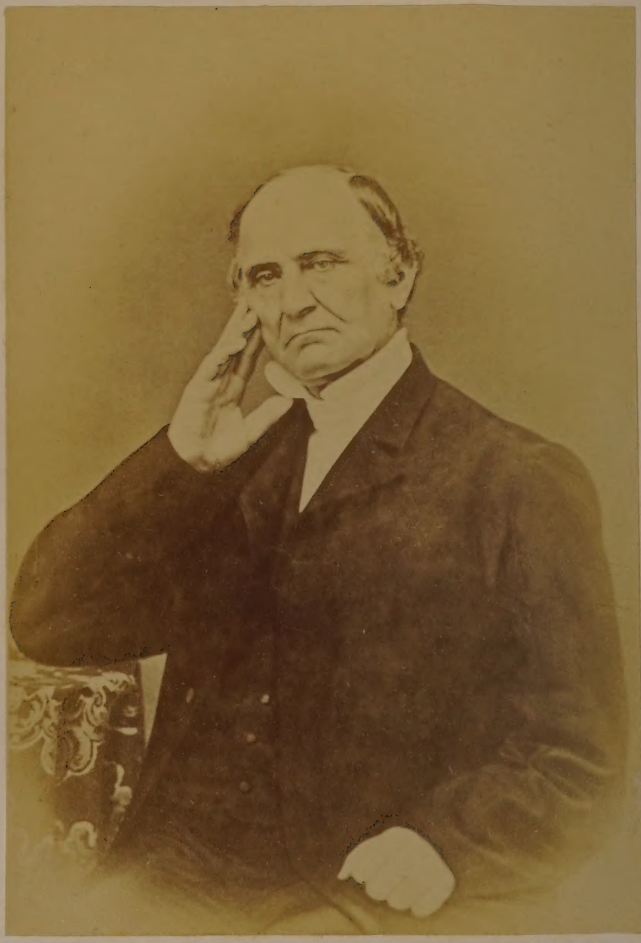
THOMAS DEWITT, D.D.

15

Miss Martha Jones.

With the regards of

Mrs Cuyler & Miss Jessup.



Thomas DeWitt

MEMORIALS

OF

REV. THOMAS DE WITT, D.D.

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INTRODUCTORY.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

NOTHING can be more instructive and interesting to read than the records made by good and true men of one who, in the estimation of all, was a model of goodness and truth. Such are the addresses, sermons, and various personal reminiscences brought together here as a tribute of honor and love to the late venerable Dr. De Witt.

To the compiler of these memorials has been assigned the task—the privilege, rather—of preparing a biographical sketch by way of introduction. The request, coming from those who only had the right to make it, was so entirely unexpected and unsought, that it seemed as if it ought not to be denied; "what thou art commanded thee, think thereupon with reverence." Therefore, though keenly alive to the fact that many more skillful hands could thus have been honored, the editor offers the following pages as preface to the more important documents.

The noble and great in heart and mind need not the props of ancestry. But it is a natural feeling to take pleasure in tracing their lineage back like a narrow stream over the

misty plains of the past, and discovering here and there some spot fertilized—some landmark made eminent in connection with it. De Witt is a very ancient name in Holland, and many men of note for wisdom and statesmanship, for boldness in war and fortitude in disaster, bore the honorable name. Macaulay tells of John De Witt, the Grand Pensionary of the Province of Holland, "whose ability, firmness, and integrity raised him to unrivalled authority in its municipal councils." Before his memorable death occurred, one branch of the De Witt family had emigrated to America: "Tjerck Claezen (thought to be son of Nicholas) De Witt, who was born in Westphalia, 1620, and came to New York in 1656." An exact list of his descendants for nearly 250 years may be found in the American Genealogical Review for December, 1874, edited by Mr. Charles Moore. But we pass over them, though interesting, as details too minute for a brief sketch. The grandfather of Dr. De Witt was Egbert, the seventh child of Andries; and his father, Thomas, was the seventh son of Egbert. He had nine sons, and but one daughter, Mary, his tenth and last child; who married, in 1756, Colonel James Clinton, and was the mother of the distinguished statesman, De Witt Clinton. Several of Egbert's sons were soldiers and officers in the Revolutionary war; and we are told that "Neponack, in the town of Rochester, Ulster Co., where they were born, was remarkable for containing the lead mine of the Revolution."

Thomas, the father of Dr. De Witt, went in his early youth to join the American forces in Canada at the time of

Wolf's victory over the French, and the surrender of Canada to the British. When the struggle to throw off the dominion of the mother-country began, he at once entered the continental service, soon obtained a commission as captain, and did not lay down his arms until the close of the war. In 1775 he went again into Canada, and was present, in December of that year, at the death of Montgomery in the attack at Quebec. He was afterwards with Colonel Willett on the Mohawk, and at the siege of Fort Stanwick. In 1782, he married Miss Elsie Hasbrouck, a descendant of one of the old French Huguenot families, who, when persecuted for their Protestantism, had fled first to Germany, afterwards to Holland, and finally emigrated to America about the middle of the 17th century.

Dr. Thomas De Witt was the fifth and youngest child of his parents, and was born on the 13th of September, 1791, at Twaalfskill, just without the limits of Kingston. The house where he was born was a stone building of moderate size, situated on a rural road, on one side of which the union of the Rondout creek with the merry waters of a mill-brook made pleasant music. The old Dutch Reformed Church, the only church in the Doctor's youth in the village, was a mile and a half from the house, and the Kingston Academy was about as far. His childhood was marked by unusual conscientiousness and quiet thoughtfulness. A story is told, as an example of his strict obedience to the very letter of his mother's wishes, that once when he was a very little boy, his mother, on going out, placed him on a chair in the middle of the com-

mon sitting-room, and told him to remain there until she returned. She was out much longer than she had intended to be, and while she was gone the old colored servant found the child in the way of her Saturday's work. She wanted him to move, but he would not, and then she attempted to move him herself, but had to give it up. He said his mother had placed him there, and told him to stay there until she came back, and he *meant to mind his mother*. The old-fashioned virtue of minding the mother, the dutiful obedience, which, as Augustus Hare says, "is the foundation of all social happiness, and of every social virtue," is so lost sight of in these modern days of law-giving children and obedient parents, that such an anecdote is refreshing.

In a brief autobiographical manuscript, which contains a few of the prominent facts of Dr. De Witt's life, he modestly tells us, that in his boyhood, he "evinced a sedate disposition, and a taste for reading and study, and therefore his parents placed him, when very young, in the Kingston Academy; that this academy was one of the oldest in the State, and in previous years sustained a high reputation, and attracted from other parts students who afterwards became distinguished in the annals of the State, among whom were De Witt Clinton and Abraham Van Vechten." It is recorded (not by himself), that as a boy at school, he was always deeply absorbed in his studies, and always went directly at what he had to do, without looking about and becoming, as other boys did, diverted in play. The Hon. A. B. Hasbrouck, in a letter to the Rev. Dr. Chambers (who kindly allows us to use its interesting

information) writes: "The peculiarity of manner which was so marked in after life, was in De Witt's boyhood equally noted and noticeable. He was seldom seen without a book in his hand, and the volumes of the little library belonging to the academy, bore evident marks of his use of them. Notwithstanding the distance of his residence from the school, he was ever ready to answer at the roll-call in spite of wind and weather. His exercises in declamation were much admired by us, the pieces being generally of a tender and pathetic character, and spoken with much fervor. I cannot speak of his recitations, as we were not in the same class; but I remember that he was the favorite pupil of the master, in a school of nearly a hundred pursuing classical studies. The academy was at that time in charge of the Rev. David B. Warden, an Irish Protestant, who had fled from his country during the troubles there in 1798. He was considered to be, and I believe was, a finished scholar, very severe, and very exacting. His partiality for De Witt, therefore, would seem to indicate his estimate of his pupil's recitations. We boys gave him the name of Sir Isaac Newton; not for his knowledge of science, which was not taught even in its humblest form, but simply because he towered above us all in our mental exercises. He never joined in our sports, partly because of his distant residence from the village, but more, I think, because of his moods of abstraction and fondness for books. Could any one have surveyed the school to foretell the future of the pupils, he would have selected De Witt as the one to be most distinguished—and so he was."

It is evident from this graphic account, which we have quoted verbatim, of his early school-days, that he had already chosen wisdom as his daily monitor, "the very true beginning of which is the desire of discipline."

The excellent Dr. Nott was President of Union College, Schenectady, when young De Witt entered the last quarter of the Sophomore class, in May, 1806, being only a little over fourteen years old. He graduated in July, 1808, and at the college commencement that summer, had the Latin salutatory assigned to him. While in college, his attention dwelt frequently on the subject of religion, but it was not until his return home that he decided to give his heart to the Saviour, and the labors of his future life to the ministry. At the close of the year 1808, he joined the Dutch Church, under the pastoral care of the Rev. Dr. Gosman, whose preaching and conversation had helped to form his religious decision. He passed the next year studying theology with the Rev. Dr. Broadhead, at Rhinebeck; and the year following with Dr. Froeligh, of Schraalenberg, New Jersey, who was appointed by Synod, Professor of Theology.

In the year 1810 the Theological Seminary of the Dutch Church was established in New Brunswick, at first called "*Queens*," now Rutgers College; and the Rev. Dr. John Livingston was elected as President and Professor of Theology. For both these offices he was pre-eminently fitted; for the first, by his wise circumspection and engaging courteousness of manner; and for the second, by his ripe scholarship and ardent love for evangelical truth. Dr. Livingston re-

moved to New Brunswick, and entered on these double duties in the autumn, when Thomas De Witt entered the seminary as a student. Dr. Livingston possessed a remarkably tall, commanding, and dignified presence; and De Witt used to tell how, on the first evening of his arrival at college when standing by the fire-place of the large students' room, he felt half-afraid to speak as he saw Dr. L. approaching. But that fear soon vanished, when the Doctor, putting his hand on the young man's shoulder, said, affectionately, "So you have come to learn divinity? Do you love the Lord Jesus Christ?" "I hope I do," was the reply. "Oh," said Dr. Livingston, "you must have more than a *hope* about that; you must be *very sure* you do, before you can preach." The mutual influence must have been strong between the minds of a lecturer so ably qualified, and a learner so rarely gifted with native genius and ingrafted grace.

De Witt was two years at the seminary, graduated in June, 1812, and was licensed to preach by the Synod of New Brunswick. He passed the summer in supplying various vacant churches, to some of which he was unanimously invited; and in the autumn he accepted a call from the united congregations of Hopewell and New Hackensack, in Duchess Co., and was ordained, November 24, in the Hopewell Church. The bounds of these parishes extended far; and as within their vicinity, particularly to the eastward, there was a great lack of religious privileges, the young divine was a missionary in the truest sense of the word, as well as a constant preacher in

his own two pulpits. He might be seen frequently by those who lived in the neighborhood, riding on horseback, the reins slack, with a book or paper in his hand, reading as he rode. And many stories are told of his absent moods, and the odd mistakes they produced, at which he would smile as pleasantly as any one. Doubtless he felt, with good Bishop Hall, "Let me but have time for my thoughts, but leisure to think on Heaven, and grace to my leisure, and I can be happy in spite of the world." He tells us, in the manuscript referred to, "the extent of territory covered by my parish led me to be much on the road in evening lectures, and induced the habit, which continued through life, of preaching from sketches or from mental preparation." In this he resembled his tutor, Dr. Livingston, who preached from brief notes, and very often without writing at all. In 1817, when he had only been a few years in the ministry, he received an invitation from New Brunswick, to become Professor of Biblical Literature and Ecclesiastical History in Rutgers College, an honor which he declined. In 1818 it was a second time proffered, but again refused. The state of religion, which had been so lifeless in the congregation under his care, had begun to revive, and he could not be tempted to leave a field that gave promise of yielding fruit to the patient laborer.

In 1825 the connection between these two churches was broken; "a dissolution that should have taken place before, but it was in a measure prevented by the common attachment to the existing minister." He then became pastor of Hopewell alone. An only and widowed sister

shared his home, and the attachment of his people in that village. She died in 1833, leaving "many precious memories" to her devoted brother. A few years before this event, he married Miss Eliza Ann Waterman, of New York, who was a member of Dr. McMurray's church, in Rutgers Street. This excellent lady doubled his joys, and divided his cares, during many years of wedded peace, and died but a few months before him. "A gracious woman retaineth honour;" and we must be allowed the pleasure of quoting here the tributes of affectionate respect paid to her by the colleagues of her husband, for none knew better than they how worthy she was of the same. Dr. Vermilye said: "Of a comely person, and dignified manners, genial and kind, with a ready and clear mind, and great activity and energy, she was by her natural gifts well adapted to conduct the affairs of her household with skill, and also to move with marked propriety and acceptance in that important sphere in which her marriage had placed her. A minister's wife may err in opposite directions, by excess of activity, which may be thought assuming and presumptuous; or, by a too retiring course, which may be construed into indifference to her husband's avocation and usefulness, and to the advancement of the many benevolent movements which spring from and cluster around the church. Through these dangers Mrs. De Witt held her course with signal discretion. Her husband's success was ever in her thoughts; to advance that good end was her high ambition, and the heart of her husband could safely trust in her." Dr. Chambers, alluding to the warm recollections cherished by a family

(that of the late Gen. John Frelinghuysen), who had entertained Dr. De Witt and his bride, soon after they were married, says: "I remember well the frequent allusions to the great personal beauty of Mrs. De Witt, her sprightliness and winsome grace. Subsequently, I had ample opportunity to see and feel for myself, how just they were. Coming to New York as an associate pastor, I was first for days and weeks domiciled under her hospitable roof; and formed a pleasant intimacy, which continued to the end of her life. During all these years there never was a cloud between us, but innumerable acts of kindness which I never shall forget." The Rev. Dr. Plumer, one of the most valued friends of the family, gave the same testimony, saying, as he pointed to her coffin, "There lie the mortal remains of as much modest, social, and moral worth as one will be apt to find in a lifetime. The God of nature and grace had beautifully adorned her heart and mind."

Dr. De Witt received a call to the Collegiate Reformed Dutch Church, of New York, in the spring of 1826, which he declined; but having it again pressed upon him the following spring, he accepted it, and was installed the 16th September, 1827. His colleagues then were the Rev. Drs. Kuypers, Knox, and Brownlee. The first died in 1833, Dr. Knox in 1858, and Dr. Brownlee in 1860. Afterwards Drs. Vermilye, Chambers, and Duryea filled the collegiate pulpits with him; and upon the resignation first of himself, and then of Dr. Vermilye, and the removal of Dr. Duryea to Brooklyn, the care of these churches devolved upon Drs. Chambers, Ludlow, and

Ormiston, where it now rests. When Dr. De Witt, however, had resigned his stated duties as a preacher he continued to fill the position of senior pastor until his death, when Dr. Vermilye assumed that office.

A long term, upwards of forty-five years, Dr. De Witt lived in the city of New York, loved, honored, and revered by all classes of men and all denominations of Christians. He was always at the post of duty; ready, not only for the regularly-recurring ministrations of pulpit, Bible-class, and lecture-room, but for any sudden summons to grief-stricken souls, to the beds of the sick and dying, to funerals, whether of friend or stranger, far or near. Yet he always seemed to be at leisure; he was never in a hurry; and no one who sought his advice, or asked a kindness, ever heard from his lips the reply, *I have no time*. Many were the societies of which he was either an efficient manager or a liberal and active member. Foreign missions and domestic missions were equally near to his heart. Asylums for orphans and half orphans, for the aged and infirm, and for all objects of mercy, met with his cordial sympathy and support. From the meeting of the Bible Society he was never absent, while he was one of the first to establish and to forward the interests of the American Tract Society. In almost all boards and committees on various charities he was to be found, blessing, encouraging, and supporting them by his prayers, his counsel, and his contributions. The dignity of his presence was often sought on literary occasions, and he was always ready to welcome, in his quaintly courteous style, visitors from other cities or other lands, renowned

for their writings or their deeds. His connection with the New York Historical Society was of long and honorable standing. "He became a member of it in 1838. For ten years he was regularly elected second, and for twenty, first vice-president. In 1870 he was chosen president, and filled that office for two years, when he declined a re-election. He was a very active and useful member of this society. In 1844 he prepared and read a paper, entitled 'Sketches of New Netherlands,' and in 1848 another on the 'Sources of the Early Settlements in the State of New York.' Both these papers have been printed in the Society's 'Proceedings.' His translations from the Dutch, of important materials for the History of New York, also appear in the Society's collections. In the public celebrations of the Society, Dr. De Witt was its recognized chaplain, and his occasional services in that capacity are fresh in the memory of its members. When the Hon. Charles Francis Adams delivered, in December 1870, his anniversary discourse, on the Struggle for Neutrality in America, Dr. De Witt was president, and introduced the orator."* Dr. Vermilye's interesting address before the Historical Society, the first time it met after Dr. De Witt's death, has been recently published and circulated by the Society.

"The *Christian Intelligencer*, the organ of the Reformed Church, was at one time edited by an association of ministers," writes Mr. Charles Van Wyck, "Dr. De Witt acting as chairman from 1831 to 1843, when the Rev. John Bevier became the editor. For twelve years or more Dr. De Witt made it

* Quoted from the minutes of the Society.

his business to visit the office, read the exchanges, and supply the editorial department voluntarily. The character and importance of the paper was fully established under his kind encouragement and wise control."

In the summer of 1846 the even tenor of Dr. De Witt's life was broken by a short visit to Holland and to England, accompanied by his eldest daughter and a few friends. The dislike he had to writing, not sermons only, but letters and diaries, is to be regretted; but for that we might possess much of interest and value. With his strong imagination and sound judgment, the impressions and opinions formed among new scenes and new people would have been vividly and wisely presented.

One of the friends who were with him that summer says: "As a travelling companion he was uniformly cheerful and pleasant. With a temper the most equable and patient, always considerate, conciliating, and charitable, his daily life was an unostentatious example to his fellow-travellers. In reviewing that journey to the Old World, which seems now almost like a dream, Dr. De Witt stands out in my mind the most prominent object. His animating and social spirit were manifested then in the varied scenes and novelties which met us continually in our route, and his historical knowledge stood ready for us at every turn, giving additional interest to our rapid transit from place to place." Among the personal reminiscences in this volume, will be found most interesting letters from the Rev. Dr. Van Zandt, of the Theological Seminary, New Brunswick, and from Dr. Forsyth, chaplain of the

U. S. Military Academy at West Point, relating to the visit of Dr. De Witt to Europe.

Upon a full, warm heart (which, as Southey says, "is tantamount to a virtuous one,") the events of life not observed by the world make the most lasting impression. Death from time to time visited Dr. De Witt's happy home-circle; but never without a token—"the arrow with a point sharpened by love"—that his errand was to carry away from earth to heaven. The first-born child was taken first, before she could turn her baby-syllables into words; and again a little boy, named after his father, scarcely two years old. Some years afterwards a gentle girl of eleven, naturally a timid child, was made willing by her simple faith in Christ to meet death with a smile. Then another little boy of the same name and age as the first. After these losses a long period of uninterrupted loving intercourse between parents and children was granted.

The two elder daughters were married within a year of each other, and formed happy homes of their own. Two children only remained to the father and mother; but they were not destined to remain long. God loved His servants too well to permit them to go down into the vale of years without detaching them more loosely from earth, and refining them still further for heaven. So death was again sent into the diminished household, and the third daughter was called away. She was just in the early dawn of womanhood, promising fair for a holy and beautiful life, but the sun of her bright morning soon ascended out of sight in a perfect and

eternal day. This loss was a sore stroke to the parents, and it was followed six months after by one equally severe. The only son, Theodore Frelinghuysen, a youth of nineteen, amiable and winning in temper and manner, died suddenly, one morning in May, 1862, without any apparent illness, of conjestion of the brain. A friend of the family writes: "I called at Dr. De Witt's house immediately after hearing of the sudden death of his only son, expecting to find him bowed down and overcome by that heavy stroke. He met me at the door, and on my saying, "Oh, Doctor, can this be true?" his lip quivered, but he merely replied, "We must remember the *mercies*." When we were abroad his youngest child died. He heard of it in London, and as we were sitting at the dinner-table, he said to me in a low tone of voice, "Little Tommy is dead; do not speak of it." Thus, like the Old Testament saints who walked with God, and communed with Him as friend with friend, Dr. De Witt neither questioned nor murmured when severe afflictions befel him, or wished the will of heaven other than it was. Like Aaron, when the blow came, "he held his peace." Like Eli, he said: "It is the Lord, let Him do as seemeth Him good." Like Job, "The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Like David, "I shall go to Him, but He shall not return to me. I was dumb, I opened not my mouth because Thou didst it." There was something sublime in the silence of his submission, for Dr. De Witt was a tender-hearted man. Yes, "with the most universal sympathy for outward things," his faith made him "inwardly calm, impregnable;

through all afflictions he held on his way so quietly but inflexibly."

The greatest bereavement, however, was to come; but not yet for eleven years. In the meantime, he made a formal resignation of his position as pastor and preacher; although his resting from stated labor was not an idle rest. Seldom did a Sabbath pass without one sermon; or a lecture night or prayer-meeting, without the consolations of his rich experience in exhortation or in prayer. The last great public act of his life was the dedication of the new Reformed Church on the corner of 48th Street and Fifth Avenue, in New York, in November, 1872. A private letter thus speaks of this effort: "He seemed feeble, and had some difficulty in mounting the pulpit stairs; but when he came forward, the spirit was strong enough to overcome the weakness of the flesh, and what he uttered was more like inspiration than anything I had ever heard from mortal lips. When he closed, I involuntarily said, 'Now let Thy servant depart in peace.' He has been spared to see this work finished, and his whole soul was in the matter."

He was over eighty when this dedication service took place. It was truly observed by a competent judge of such matters: "It was a great mistake to suppose that Dr. De Witt declined in power with age. Some of the very grandest flights of eloquence he ever uttered were in the closing days of his ministry."

He had just passed his eighty-second birth-day when the final bereavement came. It was the first Sabbath of October; one of those soft, warm, balmy days, so holy in its sweet

peacefulness, that, though it seemed a privilege to breathe the delicious air, it also seemed as if it would be a boon to a Christian to pass from such a transcript of heaven below to the reality above. Mrs. De Witt had been to church in the morning, and staid to the communion, at which her venerable husband had assisted. She remained until almost every one had left the church, and spoke to some of her friends about her enjoyment of the service, alluding to her husband's address, which she thought had been unusually touching. After she returned home she conversed at the dinner-table with more than common cheerfulness, and went up stairs, going into the Doctor's study for something she wanted to read. As she passed through to her own room, she fell at the door-sill, and when lifted to her sofa, seemed faint and unable to speak. Her eldest daughter, who had come to New York for a few days' visit, and was unexpectedly, and, as it proved, providentially detained, sent for the physician, who soon saw that there was nothing to be done. Dr. De Witt came from his study, and, on seeing the deathly paleness of cheek and brow, stooped over, and said, "I need not ask you if you love Jesus; you testified to that this morning!" She smiled, but her ebbing breath could muster no reply, and in a little while that Saviour, whose "inward and spiritual grace" had strengthened her soul in the morning's communion, received her to Himself. Before the golden sun of that October Sabbath had set, she had entered through the gates of the city where the "Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple thereof."

At her funeral, addresses were made which have been already quoted. But the words of her aged and sorely-stricken husband at the grave in Greenwood, which burst from him uncontrolled, as the coffin was lowered to its hiding-place, startled and thrilled all who heard them: "Farewell, my beloved, honored, and faithful wife. The tie that united us is severed. Thou art with Jesus, in glory, and He is with me by His grace. I shall soon be with you. Farewell!"

So came the last sorrow on the winter of his age. But as upon the spotless surface of the wintry snow, we see that the shadows cast of rock or tree are not black or dense, but plainly the beautiful azure of the sky is mingled in their darkness; so upon the hoary head of four-score years, we saw that the shadows of these sorrows had in them more of heaven's light than the darkness of earth. His daughters would fain have removed him to their homes, and by turns have taken care of him, enjoying the honor of his presence and the benediction of his prayers; but he clung to the old home where he had lived for so many years, and from which children and wife had been borne to the grave. So he contented himself by an occasional visit to his daughters, and remained in his own house. He had an early portrait of his wife, which had been put away to make room for a more modern one, brought down and carefully hung over the mantel-piece in his study. That study was the dearest spot on earth to him, hallowed by many years of thought and prayer. And there, in his large easy chair, books everywhere around him, on the table and mantel-piece, as well as in the over-filled cases that lined the

room, he might be seen sitting alone, with his noble head uplifted, and his eyes bright yet tremulous with tears of hope and faith, gazing on that beloved portrait. He was not without companionship, however; and many of those who called to visit him during that winter, can testify to his serene and peace-giving temper, and to the unselfish way in which he entered into their own concerns, and seemed as interested in the welfare of the world in general, as if he were taking an active part in it. Indeed, in recalling his happy beaming smile, and his sympathetic words and tones, a saying of one of the old divines is recalled also, "True saints in youth do always prove angels in their age."

In the spring of 1874 he went to Philadelphia to pay his eldest daughter a visit. He evidently seemed to know, although he said nothing about it, that this would be his last visit. He kept within doors almost all the time, and by his conversation and kindness and sympathy, made every member of the household feel a greater depth of tenderness toward him, and a stronger reluctance to let him go. He was always particularly fond of children; and now he testified his love to his grand-children in many ways. He would sit by the youngest grandson of an evening when he was studying his lessons for the next day, and show the deepest interest in all his books. The boy will never forget, how, when he found his Latin lines hard to construe, he was assisted by his aged grandfather. "Why, grandpa, how can you remember so well when you have not read Virgil for so many years?" "That is an easy passage to read, my son."

"No, grandpa, I think it is very difficult; but you have got a wonderful memory, only you are so modest you will not say so." Each one of the family remarked how bright all his mental faculties were, and how warm the affections of his great heart, and each one grieved when he went back to his own home.

It was on Thursday, the 7th of May, that he began to show signs of indisposition and languor that were very unusual. His daughter, who resides in New York, and whose daily delight was a visit to her father, observed his failing strength with a presentiment of sorrow, and sent for her sister from Philadelphia. This lady with her children arrived the next day, and found her father sitting in his easy chair with a book in his hand. He gave her a warm greeting, saying: "I am glad you have come, for I feel as if this were my last sickness, and I want you with me." He seemed very comfortable, however, and complained of nothing but weariness for the next few days. On Monday, the 11th, he received visits in his study from a number of friends. Dr. Adams and Dr. Hall called, and he enjoyed conversation with them. Mr. and Mrs. Robert Carter, also, with whom he recalled pleasant memories of their journey to Europe in 1846; and talked of many valuable works Mr. Carter had published. On Tuesday morning he fell asleep on his study sofa, and when he awoke, he looked around and said: "Are you all here?" His two daughters were sitting by him, and said: "Yes, dear father." He then asked them to read the 17th Chapter of St. John, and when it was finished, he, still in the same reclining posi-

tion, lifted up his hands, and began pouring out his heart in prayer with that feeling and warmth of devotion so peculiar to him at all times; but now it seemed as if he were at the very gate of heaven, full of thanksgiving. He thanked God for the mercies vouchsafed to him during his whole life, particularly for those of his ministry, in which he humbly acknowledged the Divine aid. "Because Thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of Thy wings will I rejoice; my soul followeth hard after Thee, Thy right hand has upheld me." He thanked God for his dear wife's cherished life and companionship, and for her peaceful and painless death; and then, as if Jesus were Himself close by interceding in him and for him, he took up the words of our Saviour's prayer, and with increasing fervor said: "And now, oh, Father, glorify Thyself, and as Thou hast promised to Thy Son, that they whom Thou hast given Him should be with Thee where Thou art, verify Thine own promise, and be with me to the end." That same morning the daughter of his former revered colleague, Dr. Knox, came to see him, and he gave her the "Memoir of Dr. Guthrie," which he had ordered the previous day, saying: "I thought yesterday I should read it, but I shall not." As she left the room, he said, "The Lord be with you and yours. I bless you for your own sake, for your father's sake, but most of all for your Saviour's and my Saviour's sake." A number of other friends called during the day; he saw them all, and bade each an impressive farewell. At eight o'clock in the evening, he seemed very tired, and said, "Let us have prayers." He com-

menced reading the 50th Psalm, but as his breathing seemed difficult, his elder daughter offered to read, but he said no, and struggled through the twenty-three verses. He then offered up one of his fervent prayers. As one of his daughters helped him from the study to his own room, he turned and said, "You all pity me; but oh, how much happier I am than any of you." He slept tranquilly that night, but about five in the morning, was seized with a sharp pain in the side: pneumonia had set in. He suffered somewhat all that day and night, and was too much oppressed to converse. But though very few words were uttered on his sick-bed, his ready, kindly smile, when any little attentions were paid him, spoke his perfect love and peace. On Thursday he again seemed easy; and on awakening from a short sleep in the middle of the day, he asked his younger daughter to bring pencil and paper. Then, with a calm voice, he dictated his wishes with regard to his funeral, begging that clergymen of different denominations, with whom he had held pleasant intercourse, should be asked as pall-bearers; and that others, whom he also named, should be requested to share in the funeral services at the house and in the church. That evening he was suddenly seized with most acute and alarming pains in his chest and side, which lasted without intermission through the night. He was forced to cry out sometimes, while his strong-built frame was convulsed and shaken to and fro with agony. He prayed aloud for patience and submission, and at one time said, "I never knew before the force of that text, 'The pains of hell gat hold on me.'" But He

who "was made perfect through suffering," the great Refiner, was watching the fire, and only meant to make the gold more shining and pure, so that His own image could be plainly seen. For twelve hours this extreme pain lasted; on Friday morning relief came, and his grateful soul was "compassed about with songs of deliverance." Many times during that day, and the next, when he thanked God for the quiet ease that had been restored to him, he said: "I never should have known rest from pain but for that night." On Sunday morning, on being told that many clergymen and friends had sent to inquire about him, he said, "Oh, how kind every one is to me; say that I am comfortable, but very, very weak." When his two sons-in-law came home from morning service, Mr. J—— asked if he should read to him. He said, "Yes; call the servants and children all in." So the daughters and their husbands, and the four grand-children, and all the servants, gathered together in the hushed room. The 17th Chapter of St. John again was read; for the sweet full appropriation by the dying minister, in the midst of his own family, of Jesus' last prayer with His apostles, made that chapter so doubly impressive. "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are. I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil." And again he poured out his soul in prayer, commending each separate one to the tender care of the Saviour, and asking with humble submissiveness, that, if

it were the will of God, he might be spared a return of the previous suffering. After prayer he called his grand-children to his bed-side, and blessed them each with patriarchal tenderness; and then, as if he did not want to cloud the young hearts with too much solemnity, he said with a bright smile, "Is not dinner ready yet; I hope Anne has something nice for the boys?" In the afternoon his elder daughter repeated a number of hymns to him; some of which he designated, among them, "Thine earthly Sabbaths, Lord, we love." And when she came to that verse, "No more fatigue, no more distress," he said, "Those lines are doubly sweet since that night of agony. I should not have known their full meaning but for that suffering." So it seemed that that taste of the river of death, he had on Thursday night, "though a little bitterish to the palate, was sweet when it was down," for the memory of it was always serving to make the sense of ease so doubly grateful. About five that afternoon he called both his daughters to his bedside, kissed them, and spoke to them tenderly of their mother. After afternoon service a friend from the country (between whose father and Dr. De Witt there had existed a warm friendship), who had not heard of his illness until the tidings had been received in church, hurried down to his house with irrepressible distress at the sudden news. The relief was great when she heard at the door that he was very comfortable, and afterwards on being taken to his room to find him looking so much better than fear had depicted him. He asked, with his natural kindness, after her health and welfare, and on bidding her good-bye, blessed her affectionately

As she reached the door he raised his voice to a higher tone, and said, "The next time I see you will be in heaven."

That evening he was so much better than he had been since he first took to his bed, that hope seemed to pervade the whole household. When his younger daughter and her husband were leaving for the night, they asked, "Shall we have prayers before we go?" He gave assent by beginning to repeat the 23d Psalm, in which they all joined in unison; and then his excellent son-in-law committed all, but especially the beloved and cherished father, to the keeping of the Lord, the Shepherd. About ten, he said to the rest who were lingering about him, "Now all must go to bed; De Witt" (his eldest grandson) "will stay with me." He passed a pleasant night, and the next morning seemed so decidedly improved that his dear grandson went back to college, and others of the family attended to what seemed important outside the sick-room, and apart from the one chief object of care. When Mr. J., his younger son-in-law, came in to see how his father was, on his way down town, Dr. De Witt smiled, and shaking his hand with an unusually warm grasp, said, "Do you think you will be able to take care of me a little longer?" The answer can be well imagined. His faithful attendant, who had devoted her services to him for many months, suggested that he would be refreshed if he could sit up while his bed was made. He acquiesced with difficulty, but cheerfully. He even called for the morning's paper, that he might himself read about the overflow of the river in Massachusetts; and when the arrangements were finished for his greater comfort and refresh-

ment, he was assisted into bed, and soon fell into a sweet slumber.

Perhaps his family had been reckoning upon some rare demonstrations of triumph over the last enemy; perhaps it seemed to them no more than natural that so holy and ripe a Christian should at the last utter some words to be forever treasured; or, they expected that just now for a little while the parting had been put off, and that their precious one was to be spared to them a little longer. But God had ordered His messenger to come at a moment when they looked not for him. So this sleep, that looked like the sleep of convalescence, was suddenly changed—with only a brief waking between—just time enough for a call that summoned his startled daughters to his side—into the motionless sleep of death. "As thy servants were busy here and there, he was gone."

His funeral took place at 2:30 P. M. on Thursday, the 21st of May, from the Fourth Street Church, corner of Lafayette Place. Seldom, if ever, excepting at the funeral of Dr. Knox, has a more solemn and crowded assembly been gathered within its walls. By one o'clock all the galleries were packed, and all the pews down stairs under the galleries. During this hour of waiting a thunder-storm, which had been threatening all the morning, was raging without, and added a sombre mournfulness to the church within, which was draped in black cloth wherever it could be hung. The pulpit, with its heavy columns, was lined and curtained, the galleries festooned, and the communion table and the tables in the elders' and deacons' pews were covered with it. At two the doors were

opened, and the usher came down the middle aisle, carrying two large crowns of exquisite flowers, and placed them on the table in front of the pulpit, on either side a vase containing ears of wheat and lilies of all sorts. Just then—it will be remembered by all who were present—a gleam of bright sunlight came through the opened gallery window and glanced down on the pure, white flowers, showing that the thunderstorm had broken away, and bringing out into such strong relief the crowns on the table, that it seemed emblematical of the glory received by him with whom all the storms of life were over forever. The funeral procession then advanced. Dr. Vermilye, Dr. Adams, Dr. Campbell, Dr. McElroy, Dr. Tyng, Dr. Forsyth, Dr. Duryea, and Dr. Ludlow, walked immediately in front of the coffin. The pall-bearers were Dr. Morgan Dix, of the Episcopal Church, Rector of Old Trinity; Drs. Hutton and Rogers, of the Reformed Church; Dr. John Hall, of the Presbyterian; Dr. William A. Williams, of the Baptist; President Woolsey, LL.D., of the Congregational; Dr. Reinke, of the Moravian, and Dr. Holdich, of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Then followed the family of the deceased, and the consistories of the three Collegiate Churches. Then the members of the Historical Society, headed by the distinguished veteran poet, William Cullen Bryant. Other societies followed, and a vast concourse of clergymen, students, and citizens of all persuasions and professions, filing off into the pews, until the whole body of the spacious church was so crowded that there was no more standing-room, and multitudes were obliged to go away. Dr. Tyng, Dr. Vermilye, Dr.

Campbell, Dr. Adams, Dr. McElroy, and Dr. Duryea occupied the pulpit; and between them divided the solemn, affectionate services. The hymns, "Asleep in Jesus," and "How blest the righteous when he dies," were sung, and the organ accompanied them, faultlessly; so softly, that it would not have been too loud for a room, yet so clearly, the four parts in such perfect harmony, that every word and letter were distinctly heard. After the services, the lid of the coffin was lifted, and the whole congregation silently moved up the side aisles, took a last reverential look at the holy repose of the beloved pastor, father, and friend, and then passed out of church. We remained until all had gone, and the coffin was again closed, solemnly meditating on the sublime beauty of death, the immortality beyond, and the happy unions that were soon to come.

The remains were carried to the family vault in Greenwood Cemetery.

Dr. De Witt was truly a great man. The elements of his moral greatness were humility and truth. From his humility sprang his unexampled serenity of temper and quietness of spirit. Those who knew him best never remember to have seen him impatient under contradiction, or irritated by opposition. Opinions on important as well as unimportant subjects will differ among good men. But there are some who seem to think that all who do not agree with them are less wise, less clear-sighted than themselves, or else they translate the non-agreement into a cause for quarrel. Not so with Dr. De Witt. While he possessed himself the most sagacious

judgment, the most carefully-weighed decisions on subjects of serious thought, he was not only tolerant of differences, but tender of those who differed from him, quite willing that the view taken from the standpoint of another should be as fairly observed as his own. This made him so entirely free from bigotry, that "offshoot of pride." Though tolerant of the opinions of others, in his own he was firm and decided. While he gave the right hand of fellowship to all Christians who loved the Lord Jesus Christ, yet he was a conservative adherent to his own branch of the church. He loved every canon of the Synod of Dort, every form of its liturgy, every question and answer of the Heidelberg Catechism. He loved the very name of the Reformed Dutch Church, and could not bear any change in its old, distinctive, time-honored title.

His humility kept him utterly free from egotism and from boasting. Few could possess a stronger control over speech; and though by no means deficient in the power of conversation, he fully tested the golden value of silence. Whether among his own household, or in the circles of his ministerial friends, no observer could have failed to mark the simplicity and transparency of his talk, and to love it for its "meekness of wisdom." They might with justice have quoted St. James—"If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." He had sometimes a quaint, sententious way of uttering a poetical thought or giving a decided opinion. To an old lady of ninety whose dark hair was scarcely streaked with grey, he observed, "Madam, you have none of the flowers of age upon your brow." And

when paying a New Year's call on a friend, who urged him to take a glass of wine, he refused, saying, "We must avoid the appearance of evil." On being asked what he would do if a fugitive slave were to come to him for shelter, he said, "I would take him in, and if need be, go to jail for it."

Under his calm and dignified exterior was hidden the fire and fervor of a poet. This, occasionally kindled in familiar intercourse, was constantly flaming forth in his pulpit exercises. It by no means interfered with the plain, practical lessons which all earnest Christians love to hear constantly enforced; the faith that justifies, the justification that gives peace, the peace that helps to work, the works that kindle love, and the love that goes back again to faith, the whole fabric inwrought by the Spirit of Christ. His wonderful imagination only served to enhance the joy of "the glorious gospel of the blessed God," which was the beginning and end of his preaching. The effect was to melt the heart, and stamp the Divine image upon it, and to elevate the mind, and show it things unseen and eternal. Some excellent critics on Dr. De Witt's preaching have said it was like the inspiration of a Hebrew prophet. One of them writes: "It seems to me an error to call Dr. De Witt an extemporaneous preacher. He left nothing except the mere verbiage to the impulse of the moment. Exact, careful, systematic, severe thought was the foundation of his discourses, and then, after such thought, an earnest heart inspired the language he employed." Dr. Bethune (and the eloquent know best how to appreciate eloquence) once said on listening to one of Dr. De Witt's lofty

flights, "It was as if he were talking with the angels." Whatever it might be likened to, it must have been obtained, to use Milton's words, "by devout prayer to that eternal Spirit who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his seraphim with the hallowed fire of His altar to touch and purify the lips of whom He pleases."

Of Dr. De Witt's patience under affliction we have already given proofs. His silent submission was most sweet, even when the tenderest cords of his heart were strained to breaking. But "the greatest griefs are not the most verbal."

Dr. De Witt was a gentle and indulgent husband and father, and a kind and constant friend. He was faithful and steadfast in all his affections and duties, and had not the least love for change. He was simple in his habits: an early riser, and strictly temperate—almost to abstemiousness, in eating and drinking. Though he did not forbid the use of wine, and would think it a transgression of charity to judge another man's conscience by his own, yet he was a consistent exemplar of temperance and moderation in all things. Truly he acted out St. Paul's rule, "Let not then thy good be evil spoken of; for the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." And it was this consistency that produced the respect of which Dr. Adams spoke when, in his funeral address, he said during the sixty-three years of Dr. De Witt's ministerial life no one had ever breathed a word against him. But even had it been possible for some vain censor to have

shot an arrow of reproach at him it would have fallen harmless; it could not have touched him, for he was guarded from his early youth to his venerable old age by "the invincible shield of holiness."

C. MAY.

PELHAM, *February* 18, 1875.

FUNERAL ADDRESSES.

ADDRESS OF THE REV. DR. VERMILYE.

THE present is not the time for anything like a full and discriminating account of the life and characteristics of our departed father and friend. This scene is one of sorrow, and the hour is sacred to tenderness and sympathy. A future occasion has been assigned for a funeral sermon, when those details will be appropriate which are necessary to a likeness that may in some measure set forth his goodness, which was his crowning greatness, and be recognized as a fair delineation of the Christian, the preacher, and the man. Our communion now is with death and the grave.

How mysterious a thing, Christian friends, is DEATH. Life, it is true, in all its various forms, is to us an inexplicable mystery. How and what it is that gives health and motion to the body: with which our thoughts and sensibilities and desires are connected; which gives the consciousness of being to ourselves and expression to the voice and countenance, so that others understand our meaning and emotions, and know that they are holding converse with a conscious, living thing, with a mind that conceives and reciprocates ideas; the principle within us that performs this wonderful part, how and what it is, who can tell! We see and recognize, we feel and know its existence; but its essence is a profound mystery, and must so remain until we come, in a higher and more intimate sense than now, to "see as we are seen, and know even as also we are known." And this same mystery pervades creation: in the vegetable world, from the blade of grass to the stately oak; in the sentient world, from the mote that glitters, almost invis-

ible, in the sunbeam, to Behemoth, to man, to the seraph that burns and praises before the throne. But wherein it lies, precisely what it is, no human philosophy has yet defined. Truly, we and all about us, are "fearfully and wonderfully made." With humiliation we must confess in the midst of all man's acquirements in the various fields of knowledge, that our philosophy is here of small account. Since our own life, our essence, the thing nearest ourselves, our real selves, the recipient of outward impressions, the possessor of this knowledge, the agent in all our acts, is the thing of all others perhaps we least comprehend.

And death is alike mysterious. So far as human beings are concerned, it appears to our observation to be the entire extinction of life, so that inert, senseless, decaying matter alone remains. Some strange agency has been at work; and all signs of sensation, thought, recognition of outward things, power to exert limb or muscle, to act or to feel, so far as we can discover, have vanished as in a moment, and nothing remains before our sight, nothing responds to our touch but a cold and marble body—a mere material, inanimate substance. The bloom and beauty of youth fades away like the withering flower; the vigor of manhood is all relaxed; and the aged form, that has endured the buffetings of many years, like some grand tower overthrown, lies broken and prostrate on the earth. What has happened? Where is that intelligent mind, that life that just now animated them? What was that principle and what means this death? We wonder; we speculate; we are bowed down in woe over our loss, and in humiliation and shame at the weakness of our powers, and confess that the wisdom of man at its best state is altogether vanity. But a voice comes from the eternal throne to arrest our attention, and light beams from the sacred Word

to instruct and guide us. We read at the beginning, and as the crown and consummation of God's creating work, that "the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." And again, that at death "the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit ascends unto God who gave it." Thus we learn the origin and destination of what we see, but cannot by reason explain. Two distinct things compose our being. We stand related both to earth and to heaven; both to matter that decays, and spirit that is uncompounded and immortal. We are formed of a soul and of a body, now joined in most intimate union, and so fitted for this present sphere and the duties it requires, but to be separated by death. The body was perfectly formed of the dust, and was a finished existence before the spirit was breathed into it; and that spirit made man "a living soul." Life is its essence; it was made a living being, and by its very constitution must live on and live forever, unless the fiat that brought it forth might remand it back again, of which we have no intimation nor fear. Death hath no dominion over it, except to set it free again from the body; when yet a distinct entity, it ascends to its original and source, to God who gave it. No eye can detect it, no hand can seize it when it quits its tenement, and that strange inanition succeeds. But its living existence has been proved by all its operations that have been subjected to our notice; and that it is manifestly distinct from matter, separable, and now separated from the body, appears in that the body is still perfect in all its parts, and needs only the return of the animating principle to stand up again and walk forth, and perform all the functions of a living being as fully as before. Natural death, then, so repugnant to our feelings, is, indeed, the penalty of man's first disobedience, and so a terrible thing; but in

its action it is simply the separation of the original constituents of man's being, that each may return to its primal source.

But these dear companions of time are not to be forever parted. There is ineffable sweetness, no doubt, in the thought that the mind and heart, the soul which acts, with which we held our dear communings, was not mere matter that goes down to the earth and is lost; that it did not cease to be when we ceased to obtain recognition from it; that the dream of the materialist is not to be realized either in regard to ourselves or those we have loved. But the consolation is greatly enhanced when we know that even the bodily form shall not perish. There will be an "Anastasis;" a standing up again, as the Scriptures assure us, a rehabilitating of the earthly into a spiritual body at the resurrection at the last day. There is to be a grand movement among the tombs; a great breaking up of the grave-yards of all generations; a grand assemblage of Adam's race of all ages and climes; a blessed reunion of Christ's chosen in the kingdom of our Father. The "corruptible shall put on incorruption; the mortal shall be clothed with immortality." Even the dust of saints is precious; and amidst all the exposure and vicissitudes of time and earth, it sleeps in the careful charge of Jesus, the resurrection and the life, who will bring it forth again made like unto His own glorified body. The heathens disposed of their dead in hopeless sorrow; the Christian lays away his loved ones as precious treasures, which not only he, but Jesus loves; and in the all-supporting confidence that they will not be lost. The earth shall give up the dead that is in it; and the sea shall give up the dead in it; and there will be a happy and unending union beyond the boundaries of time, in a world that knows no separation and no change but from glory to glory.

And still farther to enforce our loving faith in these great reve-

lations, we are told that, though the body is laid in the grave to await the resurrection morning, the soul, meanwhile, all of us that thinks and can enjoy, immediately ascends to God who gave it. "To depart," Paul knew was to "be with Christ." "To-day," said the dying Saviour to the penitent at his side, "to-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." Where Jesus is, there His saints will be; and there they will be at the moment of their departure. It is a gloomy thought, and not at all countenanced as, I think, in Scripture, that the souls even of the righteous are to sleep away the ages in unconsciousness until Christ's second coming; or that they are, until that period, in some separate place enjoying a limited degree of happiness, away from the blissful vision of God and the Lamb. Where Christ is, there saints will be instantly on their departure. And He declared, "I ascend to my Father and your Father; my God and your God." Oh! what a thought is this. We look upon that form, and think only of that as the result of the change it has undergone. But its partner, the living soul, was far away among the blessed, ere yet the body was cold in death; and it has experienced a transition of feeling from darkness to light, from faith to vision, and boundless joy, as well as of condition, of which we can yet form no adequate conception.

"Oh, change! oh, wondrous change!
Burst are the prison doors!
This moment here; so low,
So agonized; and now
Beyond the stars."

Need I say to you, my bereaved friends, "Comfort one another with these words." Your departed father has been spared to a good old age, and has been now taken without protracted sick-

ness, in the full possession of his faculties, in the exercise of a Christian hope, intelligent and strong, knowing whom he had believed, and resigning himself to his Saviour's hands without misgiving or fear. He dies in the home made dear to him by the tender associations of many years, and amidst the benedictions of the wise and good, leaving a name that will remain to you as a most precious legacy; and leaving to the Church of Christ the record of a pure and unblameable conversation to guide believers in their walk of faith, and an example of holy living and good works for the imitation of future pastors. With such sentiments shall we commit these mortal remains to their kindred earth—"Dust to dust, ashes to ashes," in the assurance of a joyful resurrection. They will be Christ's precious care, and He will bring them forth in new beauty at His coming. Farewell, beloved father, colleague, pastor, friend! for a short space, until we meet again. Oh! may we meet upon the shores of life. Sleep sweetly; we know you will sleep safely. Take rest, frail body, from the toils of life in the "house appointed for all living," until the trumpet shall sound, and the dead in Christ shall rise first, and all earth's children who sleep in the dust, and they who shall then be alive and remain, shall hear the summons and join the mighty throng that shall move onward in solemn array to the judgment-seat. There, thou redeemed soul and risen body, perfect man again, the purchase of Jesus' blood, shalt be justified forever, and arrayed in the white robe, the righteousness of saints shalt stand amidst the waving palms and the melodious harpings of the blessed, in the New Jerusalem above. Till then, beloved father, colleague, pastor, friend, farewell!

ADDRESS OF THE REV. DR. ADAMS.

"DEAR DOCTOR DE WITT!" I venture to say that these were the first words which fell from the lips of many in this city when they heard of the death of this venerated servant of God. "Dear Doctor De Witt!" Such words of themselves indicate the place which he held in all our hearts, and the qualities of his character which elicited a true, trustful, and unqualified affection. How good, and kind, and catholic he was!

Good men there are, as we all know, whose goodness is associated with mixed and ambiguous qualities. From your general estimate you are forced to make many subtractions and abatements. You work over them as at an algebraic equation, a plus quantity here and a minus quantity there; and a final result is a most cautious judgment. "A faithful brother, *as I suppose*." (1 Peter 5 : 12.). Not thus was it with him whose loss we all deplore. His character and life were distinguished by wonderful simplicity; like a granite shaft, which your eye takes in at a glance. Did you ever hear one utter a word of suspicion or distrust concerning him? There was no reserve or qualification as to the regard in which he was held in the community, because there was nothing complex or dubious in the man himself.

Very tender was the feeling cherished toward him as a father in this city. Disabled by age and infirmities for years past, from active service in his profession; bereaved of child and wife; thrown, as it were, into an eddy, retired and lonely, waiting for his great change to come, what a hold he had on the love and respect of thousands! His form and gait and manners were very familiar to all in our streets. While many remembered the

fervor of his eloquence as a preacher, and the tenderness of his ministrations as a pastor, perhaps he was never more useful than at that very period when, in common with others spared to old age, he may have thought that his usefulness was ended. The aged are useful simply by being good and aged. They are the objects of respect and gratitude and veneration. Not a citizen passes them in the street, or pays them the slightest tribute of civility, who is not made better himself by the act. In this way Dr. De Witt was a blessing to the community long after he had ceased from the persuasions of the pulpit. That dreamy abstractedness in which he walked along through crowded thoroughfares, slow and sedate, as if his heart were away with the angels; that calm, smiling waiting in which he sat looking for the end, what a sermon it was, to all who saw him, on the reality of Christian faith and hope!

"Almost home!" were the first words with which he greeted me, as I entered his room a few days before he died. What a glorious sunset it was, after a long and useful and honored life. I was reminded by the scene of Mr. Standfast as he went down to the river. "Now there was a great calm at that time in the river; wherefore, Mr. Standfast, when he was about half way in, stood a while, and talked with his companions that had waited upon him thither. And he said, This river has been a terror to many; yea, the thoughts of it also have often frightened me; but now, methinks, I stand easy; my foot is fixed upon that on which the feet of the priests that bare the ark of the covenant stood while Israel went over Jordan. I see myself now at the end of my journey; my toilsome days are ended. I have formerly lived by faith; but now I go where I shall live by sight, and shall be with Him in whose company I delight myself. His name has been to me sweeter than all perfumes. His voice has

been to me most sweet; and His countenance I have more desired than they that have most desired the light of the sun." *

My words are few; but always shall I be grateful that I was permitted to see and know that "good, great man." His friendship and example and manner of life, in its meridian and at the going down of the sun, I shall ever prize as amongst the greatest of blessings.

In particular excellences he may have had his equals and superiors; but in that rare combination of qualities which made him what he was, he stood unrivalled. "Whose faith follow considering the end of his conversation."

ADDRESS OF THE REV. DR. TYNG.

THE historical, social, and personal character of our venerated friend, have been presented with great clearness and propriety. There would seem to be but little remaining to be said. And yet there is a very important aspect of the personal history of Dr. De Witt, as it has been displayed before the surrounding churches of the Lord, which ought by no means to be neglected or forgotten. It was his thoroughly Evangelical character. Whether he were met in the private associations of kindred friends, or in the various public exercises of his ministry, perhaps the most prominent and habitual trait displayed in him was, that he was eminently a disciple and a preacher of the glorious Saviour of men.

In his public ministry, his peculiar trait was the simplicity of

* Pilgrim's Progress, Part II., p. 417.

his evangelical teaching. From every quarter of illustration, whether in the Old Testament or the New, in the history of the Gospels or the social and didactic teaching of the Epistles, he never failed to find the one great centre of all, or to lead his hearers to the One Gracious Saviour, in whom the life and thought of all must be found. He fully believed that there was salvation in none other. And he was so truly and sincerely, at home, and living in Him, that every train of thought seemed naturally to flow to Him and around Him. It was this great element of his ministry which maintained the attractiveness of his public teaching so completely to the close of his life, and kept his work still alive, when in the passage of years many others fade and die.

He loved the great distinguishing facts of a Saviour's history and work, in which all true servants of the Lord are always united and at home. He felt that there was a divine covering of redeeming love, which was the abiding canopy over all churches and families of the disciples of Jesus, far more important than any of the separate distinctions which it covered, or the forms of faith which had grown up under its shadow. And while not indifferent to these, he especially loved and delighted to consider and to present that to the view of all.

This one distinguishing peculiarity marked his whole ministry. I have had the pleasure of knowing him well and of seeing him often in many years past. And I was habitually attracted by this growing evangelical character of his conversation and his tastes. This constituted in him, as it must always in a true lover of Jesus, as he grows old in his Master's work, an advancing separation from other thoughts and motives, and a growing gentleness of spirit and tenderness of manner towards all.

Thus have we seen this venerable father in the church, rising as a living temple, more prepared for the indwelling of his Lord,

and more manifest and instructive to those who have gratefully watched his gradual but sure advance. His Christianity outgrew his church. His love for Christ reached far beyond any local or individual limits among men. And we are here with a common affection and respect to commemorate his goodness and his influence, "as such an one as Paul the Aged," in whom were abiding these three, "Faith, Hope, and Love," and in whose whole character "the greater of all was love," now failing not forevermore.

MEMORIAL SERMONS.

A SERMON

DELIVERED IN

THE MIDDLE DUTCH CHURCH, OCTOBER 25, 1874,

AND AFTERWARDS REPEATED IN

THE SOUTH REFORMED CHURCH, NOV. 8TH, AND ALSO IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, FIFTH AVENUE AND 19TH STREET, NOV. 29TH.

BY

REV. TALBOT W. CHAMBERS, D.D.

SERMON BY THE REV. DR. CHAMBERS.

THE GUILELESS ISRAELITE.

"Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile."—JNO. i. 47.

"THE memory of the just is blessed," or as a recent critic more exactly renders the last word, "is a blessing." The life of a just man is a fountain of good to all within his reach. His words and deeds, his example, his spirit, his whole influence, conscious and unconscious, are like dew upon the mown grass. But this does not cease when he dies. Often, on the contrary, it is increased. The course is completed, and there is no room for any unseemly development. Then the good man's life is seen as a rounded whole, and as such is embalmed in the grateful recollections of all who knew him. It operates as a perpetual stimulus to a similar career. How many children and children's children have been restrained from evil courses, or cheered in the performance of trying duties, by the memory of an eminently upright ancestor! How many public men in all parts of our land during three generations have been elevated and guided by the memory of the father of his country? How wide-spread and happy, alike in the Jewish Church and in the Christian, has been the influence of such names as those of Abraham, and Joseph, and Moses, and David, and Daniel? Few men, or none now, are or can be so extensively known as these, but even in circles comparatively narrow or obscure, there are names which tower above the ordinary level, and by their stainless integrity rebuke all wrong doing and stimulate to a holy life.

In all such cases, it is at once a privilege and a duty to preserve and cherish the memory of departed worth. This duty is

due not to these heroes of faith, but to ourselves. To the spirits of just men made perfect, discourses and eulogies, or even monuments and statues of the highest art, are of no account. To them in the abodes of bliss,

"Earth looks so little and so low,"

that its most emphatic expressions of admiration are scarce worthy of a single thought. But for our own sake, to encourage us in the Christian conflict, to awaken our ardor for higher attainments, to counteract the depressing influence of so many less worthy examples, we need to bring up distinctly and fully to mind the memory of every man of distinguished position of whom it may be said, as Luke says of Joseph of Arimathea, "he was a good man and a just." From such a flaming torch, many a lesser light will be kindled. From such a record of intellectual and moral worth, many a youth will derive a new impulse to nobler aims and a higher life. It is with a firm conviction of this truth that I now essay to speak of the good man who finished his course during the Spring of the present year, and who in the judgment of all who knew him, wonderfully resembled the early disciple of whom our Lord said, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." The incidents of his life are easily recounted.

He was born September 13, 1791, in Kingston, Ulster Co., N. Y., where his ancestors had been settled for several generations, the founder of the family having come from Holland in the year 1655. After completing his preparatory studies at the Kingston Academy, he was entered at Union College, where he was graduated in 1808, having then not quite completed his seventeenth year. He studied theology under Drs. Brodhead, Freligh, and Livingston, and was one of the first two graduates from the seminary at New Brunswick, in 1812. The same year

he was licensed to preach by the Classis of New Brunswick, and was settled over the united congregations of Hackensack and Hopewell, Dutchess Co., N. Y. Here he labored with growing acceptance until September, 1827, when he became one of the collegiate pastors, and so continued until his death, on the 18th of May last.

I propose to speak of our revered friend in three points of view—as a man, a Christian, and a minister of the Gospel.

I. THE MAN.

Nature endowed him with a large and well-proportioned frame, a robust constitution, and a face at once dignified and expressive, the upper part of which bore a striking resemblance to that of the first Emperor Napoleon—a resemblance remarked not only in this country, but also in Holland during his visit to the Continent in the year 1846. His expansive forehead, bright eyes, well-shaped nose, full mouth, and rounded chin, were no faint index of what dwelt within, and attracted respect and confidence in advance. The prevailing feature of his character was the one indicated in the text, a guileless simplicity which never varied, from his extreme youth even to old age. It appeared in everything; in the quiet and regular habits in regard to food and sleep, which doubtless had much to do with the almost unbroken health he enjoyed through life; in the management of his household; in conversation; in preaching; in intercourse with men of every class. The idea of doing anything by indirection, seems never to have occurred to him—much less of pretending to be or to do anything different from the actual fact. Sometimes this trait was carried to an extreme, and showed itself in entire absence of mind, some amusing instances of which

he was accustomed at times to relate. It is said among the people of his first pastoral charge, that when going to visit them, he would take a book in hand, and not unfrequently the horse would stop at some familiar place, while his rider, all unconscious of the fact, would remain absorbed in his volume, until aroused by some third party. This, and similar eccentricities, some of which attended him through life, were in no degree the result of affectation (not a trace of which was ever seen in him), but sprang from the entire artlessness of his nature. This artlessness, however, was at the farthest possible remove from silliness or absurdity. Good sense marked all his deportment in common life. This was greatly aided by the influence of his wife, to whom he was tenderly attached, and whom he always considered by far the best of the earthly gifts of his Heavenly Father. She was a helpmeet to him in the truest sense of that term, studying his comfort, guarding his time, and furnishing the needful social link between the severe contemplative student and the outside world. Her pleasant vivacity sent a perpetual ripple of sunshine through his home, and her assiduous attention relieved him of many a household care. As it was with the good woman in the Proverbs, "The heart of the husband safely trusted in her, and she did him good and not evil all the days of her life." And it was doubtless owing much to her wise and skillful management that he was never embarrassed by the narrow circumstances which so often in our day try the faith and patience of ministers. Unworldly as he was, and totally free from the most sordid of all vices, he was always able to maintain his household reputably, and to dispense a graceful and cordial hospitality, for "like the house of Stephanas at Corinth," he addicted himself to the ministry of the saints, and also to make a comfortable provision for his declining years. Nor was this attained at the sacrifice of

those habits of charity which one looks for in the man, a part of whose official business it is to stimulate liberal giving in others. His precept and his example corresponded. Utterly without skill in personal solicitation, he yet knew how to enforce with a master's hand the Saviour's words, "Freely ye have received, freely give;" and as he preached, so he practiced, never denying himself the luxury of charity, but giving liberally all his life, and especially and increasingly in his latter years. His gifts, however, were always unostentatious—the left hand not knowing what the right hand did.

He was naturally a man of warm heart and kindly feeling, domestic in his tastes, and never happier than when in the bosom of his family, yet cherishing wide sympathies with his kind, and especially with the children of sorrow. And this, I think, had much to do with his extreme inoffensiveness in speech and act. He would not willingly wound the feelings of anyone, even an opponent. He could say sharp things, as *e. g.*, once in reference to a very fluent but empty declaimer, he remarked, "Brother C. can say more with less effort of body or mind than any person I know," or again, of an ambitious but ineffective speaker, "Brother F. always seems to be aiming at something high, but never quite succeeds in reaching it." But such remarks were rare. In the general, not only did he open his mouth with wisdom, but in his tongue was the law of kindness. In social intercourse he was easy and cheerful, and without pretending to be a wit, often enlivened conversation with a well-told and amusing incident. One such I remember in the case of a minister more at home in sacred than in secular literature, who prefaced the quotation of Shakespeare's well-known lines, "The quality of mercy is not strained," etc., with the words, "As our sweet Christian poet, Cowper, says."

Dr. De Witt's mind was both reflective and inquiring, and had this type from a very early period. The Hon. A. B. Hasbrouck, of St. Remy, N. Y., who was a fellow student with him at the Kingston Academy, says that he was by far the best scholar in the institution, that he took little interest or share in boyish sports, but was generally seen with a book in his hand, and that in consequence of this devotion to study, he received the nickname of Sir Isaac Newton. What Dr. Hasbrouck says, of course needs no confirmation, yet it is worth observing that the late Mrs. Westbrook, widow of the Rev. Dr. C. D. Westbrook, made the same statements during her life-time. In this case the child was father to the man, for all his life he was an omnivorous reader, and yet not a careless one, for his marvelous memory allowed little that he once knew ever to escape him. What he thus acquired, he assimilated in a way peculiar to himself. Every utterance bore his own image and superscription. The substance and direction of his thoughts, the links of their connection, and the words in which they were clothed, all showed the working of an independent and original mind. His power of self-concentration, of prolonged and patient thought, of reproductive imagination, of intense emotion, and of various and incisive speech, would have given him eminence in any profession and in any sphere. But he does not seem ever to have contemplated any other calling than that of which he was such a distinguished ornament. This was owing to the gifts of grace superadded to those of nature,—which leads me to speak of

II. THE CHRISTIAN.

From the character of his Dutch and Huguenot parentage, it is quite certain that he enjoyed the advantages of a careful and religious education. One interesting feature of this early train-

ing is derived from the statement of a contemporary of his, a lady who died during the present year at the venerable age of ninety. She related that one afternoon when he was a small boy, his mother, on going out of the house, put him on a chair in the middle of the room, and told him to remain there till she returned. She was away longer than she anticipated, and in the meantime, an old colored woman began to scrub the floor. When she reached the chair where the boy sat, she wanted him to move, but he would not. She then attempted to move him herself, but he made such a time about it that she had to give up. He said that his mother had placed him there and told him to remain, and he meant to mind his mother. When she returned, she found him where she had left him, and the floor was all scrubbed except where he sat.

This little incident furnishes the key to the remarkable stability of character which he exhibited through a long life. Maternal fidelity inwrought in his mind from its earliest years the idea of duty as something sacred and inviolable. It might at times be a question whether a given course was right, but whether if right it ought to be followed, was no question at all. Moral obligation never seemed to be a fetter, and he could truthfully adopt the fine stanza in Wordsworth's "Ode to Duty:"

> "Stern lawgiver! yet Thou dost wear
> The Godhead's most benignant grace;
> Nor know we anything so fair
> As in the smile upon thy face;
> Flowers laugh before Thee on their beds;
> And fragrance in Thy footing treads;
> Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
> And the most ancient heavens, through Thee, are fresh and strong."

The sweet influences of his happy and well-ordered home seem to have concurred with his studious and contemplative habits,

in warding off vicious tastes and associations, and thus preserving him from the snares which so often beset the young while at school, and especially when sent off to college. In truth, he gained rather than lost spiritually by going to Schenectady. For it was during his residence there that his attention was first seriously turned to the great question of his personal relation to God. Still nothing decisive occurred until after his return to Kingston, where he sat under the ministry of the late Dr. John Gosman, whom, as he once told me, he regarded as his spiritual father. Here, at the close of the year 1808, he gave his heart to the Saviour, and entered into the full communion of the church. The Kingston pastor had the pleasure of receiving many seals of his long and able ministry; but one may well doubt whether all these combined would outweigh in usefulness and importance the conversion of the college graduate whom he was the means of leading directly to Christ. The change wrought upon his mind seems to have been not sudden, but gradual, what the old divines call a thorough law work done upon the soul, uprooting all indifference and vain confidence, followed by a cordial acceptance of the saving mercy offered in the Gospel. At all events it never needed to be done over. Sixty-six years of long and varied experience saw no change in the character then formed, save in the way of a natural and progressive development, likened in Scripture to the light of the dawn brightening more and more unto the perfect day (Prov. iv. 18). The piety of our departed father was even in its beginning anything but superficial or inconsiderate. It was deep-rooted and intelligent, swaying the whole man, and giving tone and direction to all else that he was and did. It rested upon the spiritual apprehension of the truth as it is in Jesus, and stood not in the wisdom of men, but the power of God.

Its interior exercises, however, are to be inferred rather than positively asserted, for he had an invincible repugnance to making any self-disclosure on the matter. I remember to have made two attempts to engage him in confidential conversation on the subject of his own spiritual experiences, simply with the view of learning something for my own benefit as to the secret of his maintenance of such a close walk with God; but each utterly failed. He courteously but firmly declined, saying that all such matters ought to be between the soul and God. The circumstance reminds one of the story told by Richard Baxter of his dealing with Sir Matthew Hale. At one time Baxter was a near neighbor to the eminent judge, and often had long and familiar conversations with him on serious subjects. In reviewing this intercourse the good man says: "I was afraid lest he had been too little for the practical part of religion, as to the working of the soul toward God, in prayer, meditation, etc.; because he seldom spake to me of such subjects, nor of practical books, nor of sermons, but was still speaking of philosophy, or of spirits, souls, the future state and the nature of God. But at last I understood that his averseness to hypocrisy made him purposely conceal the most of such of his practical thoughts and works, as the world now findeth by his 'Contemplations' and other writings." There seems little reason to doubt that much of the same feeling lay at the bottom of Dr. De Witt's reticence. He greatly disliked anything like an ostentatious religiousness, and naturally feared lest even in the most confidential conversation he might be led unconsciously to overstate or misstate the exact truth.

But while we lack any statement in his own words of his spiritual experiences, there is quite enough in the tenor of his daily life to indicate what they were. His humility was profound and unaffected. Indeed, he was clothed with it like a garment. It

was not that mock grace which deals in self-disparagement, and cunningly seeks to attract praise by deprecating it. On the contrary, it taught him the difficult art of forgetting himself. He never sought a high place, but always seemed content to take the lowest. He was completely exempt from the jealousy of superior talent or reputation, and never showed the least uneasiness at hearing the praises of even much younger men. "In honor preferring one another," was a precept exemplified in all his life — increasing rather than declining as years advanced. Even when burdened with honors, and his name a household word for every kind of Christian and ministerial excellence, he never, so far as others could see, forgot that he was a sinner saved by grace, and had nothing which he had not received. He assumed nothing, he arrogated nothing, but bore himself with all lowliness and meekness. His religion throughout was of the old-fashioned type—serious, earnest, and devout; that of one slain by the law and revived by grace. It did not have the perpetual sunshine which is not unfrequently witnessed in believers of this generation. Notwithstanding the unusual purity and blamelessness of his outward life, there seemed to be too deep a sense of the sinfulness of sin, too thorough a conviction of the extent of human depravity, for him to be always in the conscious enjoyment of the Divine favor. Yet he was not a gloomy Christian. Far from it. The serenity of his mind, his freedom from earthly strifes and ambitions, his taste for home-bred delights, his habitual cheerfulness in society, his relish for an innocent jest, all bore witness that, in his case, wisdom's ways were ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace. Nor was this interfered with by the fact that he, in common with all God's children, was sometimes called to pass through sore trial. Of eight children he survived all but two; and of those who preceded him to the

grave, a son and a daughter were taken away in their youthful prime. The shock of these successive bereavements was intensely severe, and at first heart and flesh seemed to fail. But soon faith resumed its wonted ascendancy, and the aged mourner gave an example of patient and cheerful submission which was alike touching and instructive. Even down to old age, he was a living epistle of Jesus Christ, his graces ripening as his bodily frame decayed, and his spirit breathing already the atmosphere of the blessed region whither he has now gone. The precise aspects of his piety are not easily defined, just because it was not a separable portion of his character, but entered into and blended with the whole man, giving shape and direction to every speech and act. In his family, in the social circle, on a journey, in the haunts of business, not less than in the pulpit, or the Classis, or the Synod, was he known as a devout man of God. His goodness was not put on for the occasion, but breathed out naturally, like fragrance from the flower, and was felt rather than seen. And it was remarkably equable, not subject to fits and starts; not at one time standing at fever-heat, and at another sinking to the freezing point, but steadfast and settled, undergoing no change save that of maturity and mellowness as years went on and experience became deeper and more varied. Underneath his quiet serenity there was a constant fervor which, I think, could have been born only from his habits of prolonged and intimate communion with God. It was this fervor which had much to do with his great success as

III.—THE MINISTER OF CHRIST.

Even the heathen Quintilian maintained that the first requisite of an orator is that he should be a good man. If this be true as

to speakers on secular themes, far more is it in reference to the pulpit. And that, not merely to secure the confidence and good will and sympathy of the hearers, but also to maintain in the preacher's own soul that holy glow, that genuine ardor, without which all other gifts and acquisitions are well-nigh useless. It was this trait which was most characteristic of Dr. De Witt in the pulpit. He never stood there to exhibit his learning, or to play the orator, or to dazzle a crowd, or to win popular favor, but to proclaim that truth of which he had himself experimental knowledge, and which was the daily nutriment of his own spiritual life. This was so plain that it could not be mistaken. His whole inner and outer life concurred with his flashing eye and piercing tones and peculiar gesticulation, to make every hearer feel that here was an Israelite in whom was no guile.

This feature shone out brightly in his prayers, an exercise in which he greatly excelled. Its peculiar characteristics were fullness of matter, freshness, variety, the apt use of Scripture language, simplicity, humility, reverence, and a sacred fervor which poured itself out like a rushing stream from an overflowing fountain. No two prayers were ever alike, for he no more copied himself than he did others. He appeared to forget the presence of men, and to utter the fullness of his heart as if he were alone with God. It never seemed to be merely a formal or official duty with him, but rather a coveted opportunity of holding communion with his Maker and Saviour. In this holy unction he greatly resembled one of his predecessors, of whom the great Dr. Mason said that he prayed as if he were inspired. And surely Dr. De Witt's style and spirit in devotion were always that of one "praying in the Holy Ghost" (Jude 20).

The same earnestness marked his preaching. He was not a mere essayist, or critic, or rhetorician, or composer of homilies,

but an ambassador for Christ, pleading and pressing the Saviour's claims. He fulfilled to the letter his own words in his introductory discourse on becoming a collegiate minister: "We should preach the Gospel with affection, with an earnest and tender affection which shall bear its conviction to all that we feel the influence of what we address to them, and that we truly seek their good." Nor do I think that of all the many thousands who, in the course of a ministry of over sixty years, heard the truth from his lips, there was even one who failed to experience just this conviction—that Thomas De Witt spoke because he believed, and that he preached not himself, but Christ Jesus the Lord. But it would be a great error to suppose that this pious fervor was made an excuse for incoherent thought, or vapid platitudes, or any other form of intellectual poverty. The reverse was the case. The fruit of his reading, study, and meditation was continually apparent, and he exemplified the words of Ecclesiastes, "Because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge." He did not write out his discourses, and rarely made any notes, however brief, but none the less was there a thorough and adequate preparation. His material was patiently gathered and faithfully digested, his extraordinary memory enabling him to carry in his mind two or three distinct trains of thought at once without confusion or distraction. He habitually pursued the old-fashioned plan of formally stating the divisions of his subject, but the development of these divisions was anything but formal or common-place. His audience heard a piece of close dialectics; or a fine play of the imagination; or a felicitous use of Scripture; or a chapter of genuine religious experience; or a glowing appeal to the heart; all delivered with such an *abandon* of manner, as showed the utter absorption of the speaker in his theme. He was often remarkably happy in the

selection of texts, as *e. g.*, when preaching before the Young Men's Christian Association of the 29th St. Church, he spoke from the statement concerning Saul: "And there went with him a band of men *whose hearts God had touched*" (I Sam. x. 26); or on a communion day when taking the querulous complaint of the Pharisees and Scribes (Luke xv. 2), and turning it into a just expression of our Lord's loving condescension, he pointed down to the table spread with the elements, and said, "This man receiveth sinners and *eateth with them.*" His voice was resonant and sweet, filling with ease the largest building, and its modulations were admirably adapted to express the speaker's varied emotions. His whole matter and manner, his utterance, feeling, and character, gave him, during the greater part of his ministerial career, a wide popularity, the more noteworthy because it was the same in town and in country. In Dutchess Co., N. Y., and in Somerset Co., N. J., plain people eagerly thronged the place where he preached, while the old Middle Church in Nassau St., at that time the largest place of worship in New York, was often crowded to its utmost capacity by the most cultivated portion of our population. His eloquence was of that simple, natural kind which takes hold of the broad features of our common humanity, which reaches from the heart to the heart, and, therefore, has equal power over the rude and the refined. His style had a peculiarity which I am at a loss to describe accurately—an inversion of the natural order of the sentence, a habit of making adjectives and other qualifying epithets follow instead of preceding the word to which they referred. But this peculiarity of his speech (for it is hardly discernible in his writings) never interfered with its clearness and precision. It gave an additional charm in the ears of the educated, while as to others it was true of him, as it was of his Master, that "the common

people heard him gladly." Nor was this because they witnessed his best efforts "with the feeling rather of looking at a fine picture than of being confronted by a faithful mirror." They were not allowed to do that. He did not deal in vague generalities, but discriminated and individualized human character so as to bring the truth home to the reason and conscience with a direct personal application. He had a rare faculty of detecting and laying bare the deceitfulness and perversities of the heart, of unfolding the subterfuges of impenitence and unbelief, and especially of elucidating the distinguishing marks of a true and a false religious experience. His discourses on these topics were not like the moon walking in brightness—beautiful, indeed, but cold and powerless—but rather like the beams of a tropical sun, searching the depths of the soul and bringing to consciousness all its varied deceits and disorders. How often in his hands did the Word prove itself sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart! Yet such was the manifest integrity and yearning affection of the preacher, that men submitted willingly to his unsparing analysis, and rejoiced in the preaching which showed them themselves as they were in the sight of God.

But excellent as Dr. De Witt was in the pulpit, he was scarcely less so out of it. His pastoral fidelity was remarkable. Although, as we have seen, very fond of reading and meditation, and therefore under a sore temptation to shut himself up in his library, he was very diligent, both while in a country charge and during his long service in this city, in visiting the families of his people. Here his ready and retentive memory did him good service, for all the children and grand-children whom he had once seen he knew, and could mention by name; and the familiar

acquaintance thus acquired and preserved, not only aided him in his studies of human nature and furnished material for the delineation of character, but greatly increased the acceptableness and success of his pulpit ministrations. The old and young learned to love as well as revere him, and even the truth gained fresh force as it was felt to come from loving lips and an affectionate heart. In scenes of sickness or sorrow, at the bed-side of the dying, or in the home of bereavement, he was especially welcome, his wondrous gifts in prayer enabling him to carry every bruised spirit into the immediate presence of the Saviour, while his deep sympathies, his complete command of the Scriptures, and his profound study of the ways of God with men, fitted him to suggest appropriate and effective consolations. On funeral occasions he was unequal, sometimes apparently being hampered by accidental circumstances, either in his physical condition or in the outward surroundings. But at others, every fetter was dropped, and he soared like an eagle, speaking of the character and destiny of the righteous as if he were an angel standing in the sun, or uttering admonition in words of truth and soberness, which fell like bolts from mid-heaven.

Amid the varied and perplexing duties of his pastoral charge, he found time to fill the post of editor of a religious weekly paper. From 1831 to 1843, the *Christian Intelligencer*, the organ of the denomination, was conducted by an association of ministers. Of this association, Dr. De Witt was the chairman, and as such visited the office regularly, supervised the selections, and furnished the editorial matter. His wise management gave to the paper the high character for ability, dignity, courtesy, and candor, which, with few exceptions, it has retained to this day. Only those who have had experience, know what it is to unite editorial and pastoral labors. But severe and irksome as this

service was, it was cheerfully and gratuitously rendered for the sake of the Church and the Church's Head.

He often represented his brethren in the synodical assemblies, and took his share in transacting the business of the Church, but he had no particular fondness for that kind of work, and usually left it to those whose taste or temperament inclined them to administrative functions. Yet he was punctilious in his attendance upon the Classis, and all Classical duties were carefully performed. As years passed on, his influence became overwhelming, and he might justly have appropriated the language of Job, "Unto me men gave ear, and waited, and kept silence at my counsel. After my words they spake not again." In the benevolent Boards of the Church, he did an excellent work, having been a member of one or other of them from the beginning, and often the President. So long as our Foreign Missionary operations were carried on through the A. B. C. F. M., he was the Secretary of the Dutch Board, and conducted an extensive correspondence at home and abroad. In consequence of his familiar acquaintance with the Dutch language and literature, with the persons or traditions of the fathers of our Church, and with the affiliated history of the times, he became a recognized authority on almost every question of the past, and when he failed to answer an inquirer, it was not of much use to seek elsewhere. At one time he intended to write the history of the Reformed Dutch Church in North America, and had accumulated many and valuable materials, but a severe attack of vertigo in 1845, occasioned, it was supposed, by poring over unwieldy folios and obscure manuscripts, so alarmed his friends, that the work was suspended and never again resumed. The loss we have sustained in this respect is well nigh, if not altogether, irreparable. His attainments in this branch of letters were rec-

ognized by others than churchmen. From an early period he was an esteemed member of the New York Historical Society, before whom he read two valuable memoirs in the years 1844 and 1848. For thirty years he served as one of the Vice-Presidents, and in the year 1870 was elected President, but growing infirmities induced him, after two years service, to decline a re-election.

While he was warmly attached to his own communion, he breathed a most catholic spirit toward all who hold the Head, and co-operated actively with every one of the leading evangelical institutions of our time. He was for many years President of the American and Foreign Christian Union, and of the City Tract and Mission; an active manager of the American Bible Society, and also of the American Tract Society; a director of the Leake and Watts Orphan Asylum; a member of the Council of the University of the City of New York, and afterwards a trustee of Columbia College, the oldest seat of learning in the State. In none of these cases did he seek the position, but the position sought him. With characteristic humility, he shrank from places of prominence, but when the voice of duty was heard, meekly yielded his own preferences and submitted to his brethren.

But his chief life-work was done in the ministry of the Gospel and in connection with this church. Here he was associated, first and last, with eight colleagues, with all of whom he lived in unbroken harmony and confidence. But I think his most intimate fellowship was with the late Dr. Knox, whom he nearly approached in age. For the first nine years of my service here, I had the opportunity of seeing much of the brotherly communion of these two eminent men. Different in their nativity, their training, their peculiar gifts, and the cast of their minds, they were knit together in the closest bonds as friends and brethren,

and their combined weight of character and influence was felt far and wide throughout our church and city. The life they led and the example they set are a perpetual treasure to the collegiate people. For myself, I shall never forget their kindness to me and mine. Called in 1849 to become the associate of them and the present senior pastor (Dr. T. E. Vermilye), I was younger, and far less experienced than they, and comparatively quite obscure, yet never in word or act was this circumstance intimated to me, but all the consideration to which I was entitled, and a good deal more, was freely given at all times, thus making a fund of pleasant recollections which I shall cherish while life lasts. I distinctly remember that on one occasion, twenty-five years ago, as we were going out of the North Church, where the four had been holding a joint service, I remarked to them that, as the youngest man, I expected to take the heavy end of whatever hard work was to be done. "No," said Dr. Knox, "no; you will take your equal share and no more." And this both of the others at once confirmed. The idea of seeking or taking a personal advantage at the expense of a colleague, never seemed to occur even by chance to any one of these eminent men.

Dr. De Witt was eminent for the length, the peace, and the purity of his career. He began his ministry in 1812, and he continued it unbroken, save by a short visit to Europe, until the present year of grace. During all that period he never had a controversy, personal or ecclesiastical. Holding firmly by the historical faith of the Church, and extremely sensitive to any invasion of it from whatever quarter, he yet conducted himself, even in times when the air was full of charges and countercharges in the matter of heresy, with such wisdom and grace that he never became entangled in the strife. Not because his position was misunderstood—not because he was an in-

different and despicable neutral—but because it seemed better to become him to stand for himself like a majestic column, bearing his witness in his own way, whether men would hear or forbear. As for his daily and ministerial life, there is no man of our time who could more truthfully appropriate the words of the great Apostle, "For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world." That he thus lived was not only the fact, but so manifestly the fact that no one ever even dreamed of questioning it. At no time did the shadow of a stain rest upon his character. It was all of one piece, bright and unsullied, from beginning to end.* Happy are we, my brethren, in these days of darkness, when so many noble reputations have toppled over, and so many honored names have been sadly tarnished, that we can point to one which defies the tongue of malice, which challenges the severest scrutiny, and which from the earliest years, or through an active and vigorous manhood, and down even to the feeble and tottering steps of age, has been a synonym of everything that is lovely and of good report. Death now has put upon it the final seal, and it stands apart. There let it stand, not simply an ornament and an heirloom to this church, but a stimulus to every youth, an encouragement to every believer, a pattern to every Christian minister, and above all, an honor to that Saviour to whom our father belonged, and who made him what he was.

Let me be pardoned for one or two brief reflections.

1. Here is a *Practical Proof of the Gospel.*—The life which has been recounted before you is a verifying example of the excel-

* Qui nihil in vitâ nisi laudandum, aut fecit, aut dixit, aut sensit.

lence of true religion. What Thomas De Witt was in word and act during a long and active life in a conspicuous position, his religion made him, and nothing else under heaven could have done it. Let scoffers rail, and the vain world pretend to disbelieve, but the fact remains undeniable, that such a career is not the product of anything below the skies. Neither philosophy, nor science, nor literature with its best combination of sweetness and light, ever set forth such a specimen of human nature, one so far redeemed from the soil of the apostasy, and brought back so nearly to its original position — "a little lower than the angels." Now it is true we have, God be praised, genuine, living examples of this power of grace. But with them the course is incomplete, and we know not what the future may have in store. Our revered father has reached the consummation, and he shines full-orbed from heaven. No hand can touch him now—not a breath dim his bright escutcheon. And therefore he is, and will ever remain, a proof of the unique and mighty power of our faith in building up a noble human character.

2. How *Pleasant to leave a Blessed Memory!*—After I had delivered this discourse the first time, I learned from two distinct sources that years ago, Dr. De Witt had preached a sermon in the North Dutch Church from my text, and after unfolding in his own inimitable way the lineaments of Nathaniel, said at the close, "How happy, my hearers, if you shall be found at life's close to deserve such an encomium. For myself I have nothing more to ask when I come to die, than that it may be truly said of me, 'Behold an Israelite,'" etc. How exactly have his wishes been fulfilled! Without the least intimation that they had ever been uttered, I chose this text, and every hearer who knew him, has at once responded to its exquisite appropriateness. Is it not worth while so to live as to deserve such a tribute? This

is not to be confounded with the ordinary love of fame. For that, although Milton calls it "The last infirmity of noble minds," is indeed an infirmity. Mere fame is a poor, empty bauble. But it is a solid and satisfying reality to leave behind us a memory which not only occasions no shame or mortification, but, on the contrary, is pleasant and refreshing to our survivors, animates them to all that is good, and makes it a delightful thought to them that they shall one day meet us again.

A SERMON

PREACHED IN

THE COLLEGIATE CHURCH, ON FIFTH AVENUE,

CORNER OF 29TH STREET,

ON SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 24TH, 1874,

BY

REV. W. ORMISTON, D.D.

SERMON BY THE REV. DR. ORMISTON.

"Our friend Lazarus sleepeth."—JOHN xi. 11.

AFTER a brief introduction based upon the narrative contained in the context, the preacher illustrated the endearing and indissoluble relation which exists between Christ and all believers; and the friendship which unites them to each other forever. Also, the aspect of death to the friends of Christ, as a sleep; and their awakening to a complete and endless life.

He then stated that the subject was peculiarly appropriate to the mournful circumstances in which the congregation were assembled that morning, and proceeded as follows:

The sombre aspect of this pulpit reminds us that he who has so often occupied it, will stand here no more, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." The beloved and venerable Dr. De Witt, senior pastor of this congregation, is gone. We all this day mourn the loss of a real, true, kind, loving, personal friend. We grieve because we shall here see his face no more. Never again shall we behold him, till He who calls us His friends shall come to awaken both him and us from our last sleep. It is no common loss to ourselves, to the church, to the world, which we now deplore. Seldom has so much of the purity, benignity, serenity, and charity of heaven been removed from earth by the departure of a single individual.

It would be to me a melancholy pleasure, lovingly to dilate on the many prominent virtues of his character, personal and domestic, social and pastoral, in all of which he exhibited an excellence

rarely attained even by eminent saints and faithful, devoted ministers. But I restrain myself, as this labor of love has been properly assigned to my esteemed colleague, now your senior pastor, who, by his acknowledged ability, and his long and intimate association with the departed, is peculiarly fitted suitably to discharge that grateful duty.

Yet it would do violence to my own feelings, and, I feel assured, painfully disappoint your expectations, were I not to pay a brief tribute of loyal respect to the memory, and lay one simple wreath of loving regret on the tomb of one so justly dear to us all, as a friend of Jesus, a servant of God, and a preacher of righteousness. One, whose life was as radiantly beautiful with the graces of holiness, as it was richly laden with the abundant fruits of honorable and successful labor, and whose death was so precious and peaceful, so hopeful and happy. His noble work was done, and he has entered on his glorious reward. His memory is blessed and lovingly embalmed in many faithful, grateful hearts. The name of Dr. Thomas De Witt mingles with the earliest recollections of most of you, and his presence is associated with the most hallowed and memorable events of your lives, while many of you have abundant reason to bless God, in time and in eternity, that you ever knew him.

My personal acquaintance with him was comparatively brief, but owing to his fatherly condescension and kindness, it was very intimate, and most endearing. So soon as I became his colleague he took me at once to his heart, and instantly won mine, and I ever regarded him with feelings of affectionate and filial reverence. I enjoyed frequent, delightful, and profitable intercourse with him, during his latest and ripest years, when all his graces were rich, mellow, and very fragrant. Oft have I been filled with his company, and my heart refreshed by his

converse. His counsels were prudent and safe, his words full of wisdom and comfort.

To this congregation, among whom he ministered so long, and very many of whom have known him all their days, whose first religious and spiritual life are inseparably associated with his person and ministration, it seems superfluous to speak, either of the grandeur of his singularly beautiful life, and the extent of his manifold and prolonged labors, or of the graces which adorned his Christian walk, and the excellencies which distinguished his ministerial services. Ye are his witnesses.

The beauty and strength of his character lay in the mutual harmony and perfect balance of all his faculties. His mental and moral powers were nicely adjusted, each shedding a lustre over the other. His intellectual greatness, moral grandeur, and spiritual altitude, veiled by singular simplicity, admirable symmetry, and uniform excellence, like the proportions of a vast cathedral, appeared more striking and wonderful after a separate and careful contemplation. He was fashioned after a noble pattern; everything about him was upon a large scale; under no conditions could he ever have been an ordinary man. He would have occupied a high place among the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and reformers of the past, as he towered loftily among the foremost men of his own age and class. The greatness of his character, like that of his life, was its completeness. He was nobly endowed and thoroughly disciplined. He grandly lived and gloriously died. Viewed in any aspect, considered in any relation, he was both a great and a good man, eminently great in his goodness.

Of his eminent abilities, his varied and extensive attainments, his manifold and long-continued labors, it is not ours to speak. Nor do we refer to the lustre with which he shone in the varied

relations of life, as husband and father, pastor and friend, citizen and philanthropist, farther than to say that homes and hearts alike opened at his approach, and all good men were gladdened and strengthened by his presence. Be it ours simply to note a few personal traits by which he was distinguished, and which we would seek assiduously to imitate.

First and obvious to all who knew him, our friend was characterized by *a most transparent guilelessness.* He was a genuine Nathaniel, perfectly open and undisguised in all his plans and purposes. Generous, open-hearted, and confiding in the sincerity of others, every evidence of duplicity was painful and abhorrent to him. Artless and undesigning as a child, he had no sympathy or fellowship with those who sought the attainment of even laudable ends, by cunning craft or wily strategem. He could never profess a sentiment he did not hold, or express a regard he did not entertain. His language and manners were frank and sincere, yet invariably benignant and courteous. In his later years he wore a royal robe of Christian urbanity and patriarchal simplicity.

He was also eminent for *inflexible uprightness:* a quality which underlies all that is estimable in character, noble in spirit, trustworthy in friendship, or reliable and honorable in the intercourse of life. Nothing could induce him to swerve from what he believed to be true, or regarded as just; nor could he compromise his dignity, his consistency, or his purity by approving measures, however plausible or politic, if questionable in principle, or by seeming to uphold what was dubious or false. He might be mistaken, but never dishonest; misinformed, but never disingenuous. On all questions of right and justice, none ever doubted on which side his advocacy would be found. His integrity was clearly that of a candid and enlightened mind, of a pure and

gentle heart, seeking at all hazards to keep a conscience void of offence.

Nor can we forget his *affectionate gentleness*. How warm his affections; how tender his sympathies; how kindly his charities! Amiable in disposition, affable in manner, gracious in deportment, he drew all hearts towards him. He was truly a man greatly beloved, and deservedly so, for he loved all. The law of love was in his heart, and words of kindness on his tongue. The wayward and the erring found in him a kindly reprover and a lenient judge; the poor and the destitute, an open ear, a feeling heart, and a ready hand; the penitent and humble inquirer, a fatherly welcome, wise counsel, and spiritual consolation; few mourning or troubled ones left his presence who did not leave part of their burden behind them, and go on their way with a lighter and a gladder heart. In all his intercourse there was a mild benignity which dispelled diffidence and inspired confidence, and a lofty dignity which silenced silliness and abashed impertinence.

We only notice, farther, his *personal holiness*. His was a consecrated life. His piety was humble and heartfelt, mature and mellow. Ever since I knew him, he seemed to live apart from and above the present world. His conversation was in heaven. His religion was that of a clear judgment, a tender conscience, strong emotions, and gracious habit. Among men he walked with God, and now he is not, for God hath taken him. He left upon all who met him an impression of peculiar sanctity. His last days, in particular, were spent very near the portals through which he has now passed. He seemed to enjoy delightful communion with the perfected spirits above, even more than with the brethren he loved below. He was waiting, listening for the summons to go up higher; when it came, he was ready, and gladly entered into his rest.

Let us, dear friends, who knew him so well, and revered him so much, follow him as he followed Christ, in the guilelessness, the uprightness, the gentleness, and the holiness of his life. When we think of all he was—the place he filled, the services he rendered, the moral power he wielded, and the spiritual influence he exerted as a pillar, an honor, and an ornament of our Church—the language of the sorrowing son of Shaphat, concerning the translation of his master, comes irrepressibly to our lips: "My father! my father! the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof;" or, we take up the wail of David, over the gallant son of Ner: "There is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel;" or, we join in the lamentation of the Psalmist: "Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth." We mourn his removal, for he was our friend. It were to manifest ingratitude to Him who gave him to us and spared him so long, not to mourn; but we mingle gladness with our grief, and thanksgiving with our mourning, for he was the friend of Jesus. Jesus loved him as a friend; and as our friend, he has gone to be with Him whom he loved. All who truly loved him must rejoice, that in a good old age, an old man, full of years and full of honors, in the exercise of all his faculties, surrounded by his family and friends, in the sure hope of a glorious immortality and eternal blessedness, he fell asleep in Jesus, came to his grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in his season.

To his colleagues in the ministry, and office-bearers in this church, his removal is an earnest admonition to renewed diligence and increased fidelity in the discharge of their sacred duties, and a solemn warning that we, too, must soon give an account of our stewardship. May a double portion of his spirit rest upon us all, a spirit of humility and meekness, of patience and devotedness, of charity and love.

To the members of the church, many of whom are his spiritual children, whom he baptized, instructed, exhorted, admitted, visited, counselled, and cheered, need I say, cherish his memory, recall and treasure up his many faithful ministrations, walk in his footsteps, imitate his graces, and so add to his blessedness. Follow him as a friend in Christ, fellow-worshipers, brethren beloved, as seals of his ministry, proofs of his apostleship, stars in his crown.

Two weeks ago to-day he sat with us at the table, where Jesus meets His friends. Our fellowship with him was sweet; and he poured forth his own heart and ours in fervent supplications and joyous thanksgiving. That was his last appearance in the sanctuary, his last public service. Henceforth we shall see his venerable form no more; never more listen to the tremulous tones of his well-known voice, or join with him in lifting up our hearts in earnest pleading or in grateful praise. He has joined the spirits of just men made perfect, and unites in the song of Moses and the Lamb. They above and we below form one family. All one in Christ, his friends and friends to each other. The bitter separation is brief, a joyous meeting and an eternal reunion is near.

If there are any who have often heard the offers of salvation from his lips, but who have not yet accepted it, let the symbol of sorrow which drapes this pulpit to-day, give special solemnity and impressiveness to the oft-repeated message, "Be ye also ready." What! must he who so often plead pathetically with you to be reconciled to God, be constrained to bear witness against you, and testify, Lord, I often with tears entreated them to come in; but they would not.

To have enjoyed the ministry of such a man was a great privilege and a grave responsibility. Our sincere and reverent re-

spect for the Messenger will avail us nothing, if we be found to have rejected his message and his master. "Mark thou the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace." "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

A SERMON

PREACHED IN

THE COLLEGIATE REFORMED DUTCH CHURCH,

COR. 5TH AVENUE AND 48TH STREET,

ON SABBATH MORNING, MAY 24TH, 1874,

BY

REV. J. M. LUDLOW, D.D.

SERMON BY REV. J. M. LUDLOW, D.D.

"Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel."—II. SAMUEL, iii. 38.

I DETACH the text, for our use to-day, from its original reference to Abner, the son of Ner. It has acquired an independent historical significance; for since the days of David, it has been the favorite text for sermons in eulogy of the distinguished dead. How often Cathedrals and Abbeys have rung with the funeral eloquence starting with this same sentence, as kings and statesmen, warriors and writers have been lowered to the crypt! And how often the text has been misused on such occasions, through either intentional flattery of the pageanted dead, or gross misapprehension of the elements which constitute true greatness!

Who are the great? Not necessarily the occupants of great positions. We commend not the amount of the stone-mason's toil on the pedestal, but the exquisiteness of the sculptor's touch, making the marble face gleam with intelligence, and the muscle to almost move, as if it felt beneath it the play of nerves. So it is not the throne, nor any circumstance, but the man alone whom we must estimate.

But not the man as a mere force. We must not estimate him solely as he makes himself felt. The men most noted for what they have seemingly accomplished, are often but the face of the hammer which smites, not the arm which swings it. They occupy points where great movements have culminated, the real force of which has been gathered from the masses of the people,

or accumulated in the growing sentiment of generations. Some of the smallest men have thus been enabled to make the deepest cut upon the brazen tablet of history.

Nor does the possession of personal ability assure us of real greatness. When all the vigor of the body is drained away to one organ, we call the creature a monster, a deformity. But how often all the vigor of the mind is drained into some one faculty, giving the aspect of unwonted strength in that direction! We are, then, apt to notice only the extraordinary development, and not the withered totality of the man. The great warrior is too often but an intellectualized brute; the successful politician, one who has a morbid propensity for seeing the weaknesses of his fellows, and using them; our money kings, the incarnation of greed, or men who have lashed themselves to almost superhuman toil by the most contemptible passion for show; our most applauded literary characters, men who are so carried away with the play of their own fancies, that they have not strength enough left to act with common-sense and fidelity in the ordinary spheres of life.

The truly great man is he who has the most of the best qualities, and has them in the best combination or mutual adjustment. But such a person is not the most apt to attract the attention of the multitude. One is not greatly impressed with the interior height of the cathedral at Cologne, though there are few steeples in New York which would not stand clear under its roof. This illusion is due to the long vistas and grand sweep of the arches, all lying in such exquisite harmony. A rough scaffold of the same altitude, erected in the open field, would impress you more in that one respect. A jagged point of rock astounds you with its magnitude. You did not notice the hill, thrice as large, which modestly hid its vastness beneath its graceful contour. Thus many

of the greatest men have been unpraised, save in the deep admiration of the discerning.

I take this text to-day over this draped pulpit, not in mere conventional propriety, since it is expected that I should make some allusion to that patriarchal man, who has been for so many years the senior, not only in our pastorate, but in many of your hearts; but because, both in the conviction of community, and in my own appreciation, there is a rare pertinency in the text, "Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel!"

Dr. De Witt was a man of great soul, as displayed in the *strength of the moral principle* which always actuated him. Few men's lives have so manifestly rooted themselves in a sense of duty, as did his life. In the testimony of those who best knew him, there was no room in him for the play of expediency between "I ought" and "I will." His conduct was easily understood and anticipated, because it moved in a straight line, and that line was projected by a clear conscience, which had not been bleared by the passions of youth, nor by the too common sinister ambitions of middle life.

He had thus acquired more than strength of moral principle: he had a depth of *moral feeling*, which was a state of sublime scorn of everything beneath the highest conception of duty. Thus he did not seem to be personally aware of temptations to which the most of men are subjected. As the deep, full-flooded river moves on without a ripple over the holes and rocks of the bottom, while the shallow stream is dashed into foam or turned off its course by them, so grandly did he move among the moral obstacles which trouble and often destroy the characters of ordinary men.

While few took less immediate interest in the details of busi-

ness, and the more noisy public movements of the day, I doubt if any minister in our city ever had better influence upon business men than did he. His very aspect to those who knew him, was a more powerful sermon upon honor and integrity than most ministers could preach.

To this immobility of principle he added an unusual *equanimity of temper*. Perhaps no one ever saw him ruffled. He was never thrown off his balance. His quick responses were as candidly and as complacently given as were his deliberate utterances. The self-possession, exactness, and discrimination for which he was noted as presiding officer in so many associations, ecclesiastical and benevolent, were all retained amid the cares and recreations of daily life.

And very remarkably this self-possession was not due to anything phlegmatic or sluggish in his temperament. He was easily moved by whatever appealed to the generous qualities of the heart. He was deeply sympathetic. He wept with those who wept; and much of the grief at his funeral was in honest repayment of the tender feeling others had drawn from him. A phlegmatic temperament would never have swayed audiences by deep heart eloquence, as he used to do when in his prime.

Nor was his equanimity due to anything like stoicism, or mere power of will by which he retained self-control. It was too natural for that. Its only explanation, aside from its religious aspect, was in the real greatness and nobleness of his disposition, which made him personally above the ordinary suggestions of selfishness. He seldom showed himself aggrieved or offended, because he was not in the habit of thinking much about himself. He was without that suspiciousness which is the mark of a little mind, and abounded in the charity which "envieth not, . . . seeketh not her own, . . . thinketh no evil." His society

was thus a resting-place for others in their troubles, as the fretful stream loses its ripples when it mingles with the placid lake. Of late years he was very brief in his calls upon the people, but all felt a benediction from his quiet, dignified presence; his aspect was a sort of "peace be to this house!" and calmed many a vexed heart, of whose trials he knew nothing.

Doubtless both these qualities, staunchest integrity and imperturbable equanimity, were largely due to the third notable trait of his character, viz.: *clear and decided belief*. His mind could not rest in the vague generalizations of doctrine, which seem to satisfy so many. The objects of his faith were as definite as the language of the Creed. Descended from the old Dutch stock, bearing a name associated with the glory of the Netherlands, quietly boasting that he had no blood in him but what was from the Holland and French Huguenots, he adhered as tenaciously to his ancestral theology. Christian truth lay in his mind sharply cut with the logic of Calvin, yet all aglow with the earnestness of a Holland martyr. He was fascinated with the memories of his Church, and in hearty love for it, mastered, and retained to the end of his life, the Dutch language, and made himself one of the best read men of this country in the details of Dutch history.

Yet he was one of the most *Catholic spirited* men in all the Church. There was not a drop of bigotry in his veins; not even of Protestant bigotry, which, let us confess, does lie in spots of scum on the surface of the otherwise refreshing spring of Protestant thought. The dying appointment of bearers for his funeral, selected as representative men from the various Denominations, attesting that his last thoughts were upon the unity of the faith, was a very natural appendix to the story of his more active life. Old Dr. De Witt was one of the best rebukes for the narrow-visioned, narrow-hearted, middle-aged, and young men, who

conceive of orthodoxy as a state of obliviousness to everything beyond their own Catechism and Church. We shall best honor the fathers in the Church, not by stubbornly standing where they happened to be when God called them away, but by emulating their progressive enterprise and wide-reaching Christian charity, which made the Church a power in the community during their day. They would not thank us for petrifying the Church as they left it, and calling it their monument; but rather for making it what they tried to make it: most active, most catholic, and thus most useful. The Huguenot blood is not like that of St. Januarius, a globule of matter, kept as a memorial of something in the dead past; but is living and flowing to-day through all the veins of our common Protestantism. And he is most loyal to the Church who feels most its generous, liberal spirit, most sympathetically related to the whole brotherhood of Christ.

I must note another feature in the heart lineaments of our venerable pastor, viz.: the deep *experimental character* of his religious convictions. He not only believed, he lived Christian truth. The articles of faith were the anatomy of his soul-life.

Holding the highest conceptions of the sovereignty and all-pervading presence of God, he was made by that thought one of the most *reverent* of men. He seemed always to move as if conscious of that august Presence; and the glory of the throne at which he looked, hallowed him, and made us reverent in *his* presence.

Holding to that most precious form of Christian doctrine, the covenant relation of believers to God through adoption, he lived in the simplest, most child-like confidence. He was one of the most cheering exemplifications of the Apostle's statement, that "perfect love casteth out fear."

Conceiving the cross of Jesus to be the necessary centre of the whole system of redemptive truth, the blood of the vicarious sacrifice the only solution of the problem of human justification and life, he was extremely sensitive to its meaning. A deep sense of personal unworthiness was mingled with a joyful "glorying in the cross." "Grace! Grace!" was the "Selah" in his psalm of life.

Holding to the doctrine of the still living Headship of Christ over the Church, and His real presence with believers, he communed with Him "whom having not seen" he loved. Those who saw him when a few months since he stood by the grave of his wife, as the precious dust was being committed to the earth, will never forget his testimony to the reality of Divine help, as raising his staff toward heaven he broke the silence, "Farewell, my beloved and faithful wife! The tie that united us is severed. Thou art with Jesus in glory. He is with me by His grace. I will soon be with you. Farewell!"

Holding to the future blessedness of believers, he was always ready to depart and be with Jesus, which was far better; and the most serene moments of his whole life were those during which he waited, watching the last sands run out of the glass of his mortality, until it should be reversed, and life begin anew with the full measure of immortality.

Let me make a statue beneath which this inscription, *A prince and a great man*, might well be written. Let the stalwart and upright form represent integrity; the massive, serious brow impress the beholder with the intelligence and earnestness of convictions; the deep-pupiled eye, resting beyond the horizon, speak of far-reaching hope; the placid countenance tell of a peace which the world can neither give nor take away; the smile upon the lips show the overflow of the soul in generous love. Now bow the head, as if it felt

the touch of the light from above, for reverence. Now put *life* into the whole figure. You easily recognize it. It has walked your streets for half a century. It has stood in this desk. As the patriarch Jacob "worshiped, leaning upon the top of his staff," and blessed his children of two generations, so that patriarchal figure has worshiped with and blessed us.

Although a more formal discourse, commemorative of the life of Dr. De Witt, will be pronounced by another at a future day, I have felt that I could not allow this first Sabbath of our Church's grief to pass, without this hearty, though hasty, tribute to the memory of our now sainted senior pastor. Yet I am aware that this seeming eulogy would not be desired by that modest, good man. Could he have ordered my discourse, he would have said, "Preach not of me, but of Christ, to whom I owe all that I was upon earth, and all I shall be in heaven." Yes, Christ is the summing up of all the lessons of Dr. De Witt's noble life and peaceful death; all our memories of him, all our affection for him, coming up from the past years of his faithful ministry, unite in this one voice to-day, "Come to Jesus!" While we wait for the time of our departure, let us heed the injunction so signally exemplified in this beautiful life, "That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

PERSONAL REMINISCENCES.

THOMAS DE WITT.

"KNOW YE NOT THAT THERE IS A GREAT MAN FALLEN THIS DAY IN ISRAEL?"

AH! know ye not that from the earth
A light and power are gone?
A great man from our midst removed,
One widely known, and well-beloved,
Has laid life's burden down.

A life so grandly beautiful,
So guileless, pure and wise,
Were less akin to earth, than heaven;
And thus the spirit-wings were given
That bore him to the skies.

He lived above the world and left
A character so bright,
So perfect in its harmony
Of Christian graces, none could see
A spot to dim its light.

His name stands out in bold relief,
With names that never die;
And earth is poorer for his loss,
And heaven is richer for the gain
Of one who long upheld the Cross,
Nor lived his life in vain.

E. BOGERT.

NOTE.

THESE "Personal Reminiscences" were sent in the form of letters to the editor, who, wishing to obtain as many facts as possible respecting Dr. De Witt, wrote to a number of his friends among the clergy and laity. Some have simply expressed their approbation of the endeavor to preserve the honorable name as a legacy to the church. The Rev. Dr. Hutton, in his most kindly note, says: "My memories of dear Dr. De Witt are, indeed, among the most cherished of my life. I loved him, respected him, admired him. I never heard him say anything that might not be repeated before the world; but I can recall nothing which would add to the estimation in which he was universally held." Professor John De Witt, of New Brunswick, says: "I need not tell you that I am greatly interested in your work; there ought to be such a memorial of Dr. De Witt. I have known him from my childhood, and he was my father's friend and companion in early years, and yet I could add no incidents to your narrative. I can only dwell on admirable traits of character that others knew more of than I. His life was truly beautiful and grand; and I sincerely loved and admired him." Similar replies were sent by Professor Tayler Lewis, of Union College, Schenectady; Dr. Abeel, of Newark; and Dr. A. R. Van Nest, late of Florence, Italy.

The editor most gratefully acknowledges the graphic letters which make up the ensuing chapter. They contain those individual traits that are needed to give life and variety to biography; they are like the different-voiced stops in an organ that give new effects to one simple theme.

C. M.

FROM THE REV. JOHN FORSYTH, D.D., CHAPLAIN AND PROFESSOR OF ETHICS AND LAW, U. S. MILITARY ACADEMY, WEST POINT.

I WOULD gladly aid you, if I could, in preparing a proper memorial of one whom I so profoundly venerated and loved as I did Dr. De Witt; but all the help which I can render you will be slight, compared with that which I am sure you will get from those who had the privilege of almost daily intercourse with him during many years. Perhaps I might give you as good, though not so finished and artistic, a portrait of him as they, for it did not require a long acquaintance with him to comprehend his character, his sincerity, simplicity, and strength. Even a stranger casually meeting him in any company, could not fail to have been struck with his grand *physique*, and to have been impressed with the belief that it was a symbol of the nobler man within. But I take it, from the tenor of your note, that what you wish me to send you is not my estimate of him as a man and a Christian minister, but my personal recollections of him. For my own sake, as well as yours, I am very sorry that I cannot supply you with a greater number of the sort of incidents you want.

The first time that I remember to have seen Dr. De Witt, was on the steamboat wharf at New Brunswick, when I was a student in Rutgers College. He was pointed out to me by some one who knew him, as he and Mrs. De Witt were waiting for their luggage. I looked at him with no little interest, as I had often heard him named as the most eloquent preacher in the Dutch Church of that day; and I had also been told by a venerable resident of New Brunswick, with whom I was boarding,

some amusing stories of the doctor's absent-mindedness. This gentleman had known Dr. De Witt when he was a student in the Theological Seminary, and I well remember the zest with which he related the story of his young friends' walking, in all sorts of weather, some four or five miles into the country to visit an humble household, one of whose members was dying of a lingering disease. He added that when some of Mr. De Witt's fellow-students expressed surprise that he should go so far and so frequently simply to see the man, the former replied that he went not only to comfort the sick, but because he there got lessons in pastoral and practical theology which he could nowhere else so effectually learn.

I did not become personally acquainted with Dr. De Witt until some time after my own entrance into the ministry, and I quickly felt for him a warm affection. Whenever I happened to be in New York of a Sunday, and to worship, as I generally did, with my wife's family in the collegiate church, it was ever a special delight to me to see Dr. De Witt ascend the pulpit. During my pastorate in Newburgh he came there to visit me, and to supply the Dutch Church. On Sunday morning, when we parted for the work of the day, I had no expectation of seeing him again until evening, as I knew that he would meet some old New York friends of his in the Dutch Church, and that they would insist upon his going with them to dinner and to tea. They did insist upon his going with them, as I had anticipated, but he replied to them: "No. I follow the Scriptural rule, 'Into whatsoever house ye enter, there abide.'" And so I had the pleasure of his company during the whole of that Lord's day, except while we were occupied with the services of the sanctuary.

In 1846 Dr. De Witt visited Europe for the first, and, I believe,

the only time, in his life, and it was my privilege to cross and recross the Atlantic with him. We had a very pleasant company on our outward voyage, which included his daughter, Mrs. Cuyler, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Carter, Dr. Wilson (then of Cincinnati, now of Louisville), and the late Dr. Polhemus, of Newark. We reached Liverpool on a Saturday, and the next day Dr. De Witt went with me to hear Dr. Hugh McNeile, then rector of St. James' Church, now Dean of Ripon. He gave us one of his grandest sermons, afterwards published in the *London Pulpit*, and which deeply impressed Dr. De Witt, as he often spoke of it in after years. We parted the next day, and a few weeks afterwards Dr. Polhemus and myself rejoined him in Holland; but, unfortunately, we did not reach there in time to witness the attentions he received in the land of his ancestors. One thing I noticed, that he was no great sight-seer. He seemed more taken up with Hollanders than with Holland; and I well remember how heartily he agreed with his old friend, the Hon. Harmanus Bleecker, of Albany—at one time Minister to Holland, whom we met at the Hague—who indignantly denounced the upper classes in Holland for being (seemingly, at least) ashamed of their mother-tongue, the French language being almost exclusively used by them in their families and in society.

We returned to England by way of the Rhine, Belgium, and France, and reached London in time for the preliminary meetings of the Conference, out of which grew the Evangelical Alliance. These meetings were held in Freemason's Hall, and I am sure that no one who attended them can ever hear the name of that hall without being reminded of the rich spiritual and social enjoyments there experienced, and of the able discussions of matters of vital importance to which he listened—some of them of special interest to the American members. In this

Conference were such men as Edward Bickersteth, Baptist Noel, Thomas Binnie, John Howard Hinton, of London; John Angel James, of Birmingham; Dr. Raffles, of Liverpool; Drs. Wardlaw and Buchanan, of Glasgow; Dr. A. Monod, of Paris; Professors Tholuck, of Halle, and Hoffman, of Basle. Among these distinguished men Dr. De Witt was recognized as being every way their peer. He was called upon to second what might be called *the great* resolution, viz.: the third of the series adopted by the Conference, and which was in these words:

"That the members of this Conference are deeply convinced of the desirableness of forming a confederation on the basis of great Evangelical principles held in common by them, which may afford opportunity to the members of the Church of Christ of cultivating brotherly love, enjoying Christian intercourse, and promoting such other objects as they may agree hereafter to prosecute together; and they proceed hereby to form such a confederation, under the name of *The Evangelical Alliance*."

I think you will agree with me that Dr. De Witt's speech deserves a place in this memorial volume.

"I heartily sympathize, Sir, with the beloved brother who presided over our devotional exercises, when he said, that the place he then occupied he felt to be the most exalted he could covet or possess. I feel that it is a privilege, indeed, to second the resolution which is now offered to form the Evangelical Alliance. Happy would I have been to have remained in this house unnoticed and unheard, a silent and gratified spectator and listener; but to be allowed the privilege of seconding this motion, is an event the remembrance of which will, I doubt not, remain with me even to my dying bed. In the institution of that Alli-

ance, the formation of which we are now entering upon, I find the realization of long-cherished desires and hopes. Though in great feebleness, I have, in my limited sphere, and with my small measure of influence, sought to cherish the spirit of affection and confidential intercourse with my ministerial brethren, as well as with private Christians. I have felt the desirableness of breaking down the partition walls which exist not so much in denominations as in spirit; and of visibly meeting, as one in Christ, and as one in our common labors. And when the project—emanating from this great centre of influence in the Christian world—reached our shores, I greeted it as an omen for the good of our world. I hailed it as a star which was rising and would culminate. Gladly, when deputed to attend these meetings, did I look upon the Atlantic; and are we not here all present, prepared to unite in and repeat the chorus, 'Blessed are our eyes, for they see what kings and prophets desired to see, yet saw not,' and 'Blessed are our ears, for they hear what kings and prophets desired to hear, and yet heard not.' And, Sir, I am cheered with a strong and confiding hope that we shall perfect the work which we have now begun. I was not without my fears—and fears were also expressed by my Christian friends—that in proportion to the exceeding desirableness and magnitude of the object, was the danger, lest the safeguards of truth should not be united with the cement of love; but these fears have passed away, and have been changed into strong hopes; and these anxieties have yielded to firm confidence. I have watched in the preparatory meetings, and I have listened and have compared and have marked what I thought to be the wisdom and the candor displayed in all these assemblies. I felt myself to be in an atmosphere of love, which I could not but inhale and breathe forth. I have been struck, too, with the humility, and the

dependence upon the Spirit of God which have been manifested; and in that dependence is our strength. 'When we are weak then we are strong,' and I would say in reference to a remark made by the respected Brother who preceded me (Rev. Dr. Buchanan, of Glasgow,) as to trials, and obstacles, and difficulties, let us, instead of looking askance at each other, and repeating our own Shibboleths, look unto Jesus who is the Author and Finisher of our faith. 'Behold the Man, whose name is The Branch, for He shall grow up out of His place, and He shall build the temple of the Lord, even He shall build the temple of the Lord, and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne.'

"Let me, Sir, in the name of my American brethren, say, that we greet the commencement of the organization of the Evangelical Alliance. Under the genial influence of your protracted councils, we have found ourselves drawn closer and closer. We thank God on your behalf, that among you has arisen a branch, which, we trust, will spring up in our western soil, and take root and spread itself through that extended field, where there is much land to be possessed—a branch, the leaves of which shall be for the healing of the nations. It is, indeed, good for brethren to dwell together in unity. It is like the holy oil that flows from the great High Priest of our profession, and falls down to the skirts of His garments—every member of the blood-bought and sanctified flock of Christ. And that spirit will assuredly calm and soothe the troubled surges of all religious controversy and animosity. It is good to be here, Sir, for the dew of heaven is falling, and here God commands His blessing, even life forevermore. It is good to be here; but let us build no tabernacles; let us rather go and carry this eternal life to a perishing world."

Of the subsequent discussions in the Conference—and some of them were very earnest and protracted—Dr. De Witt was a con-

stant and interested hearer; but he took no active part in them. This was mainly due to the fact, that soon after the opening of the Conference, the sad tidings reached him of the death of his son Thomas. It was a heavy blow to him and Mrs. De Witt, and all the heavier because when it fell, an ocean separated them. Dr. De Witt felt it keenly, and yet those who saw him daily (Drs. Polhemus, Van Zandt, Mr. Carter, and myself) were struck with the calm, Christian fortitude with which he bore it.

In later years I often met him in his own home, at the meetings of Classis, and in one or two General Synods, but I can recall at this moment no incidents of special interest. All that I need say, is that from year to year I felt for him an ever growing veneration and love, and my heart re-echoed the first three words of Dr. Adams' exquisite address at his funeral, "Dear Dr. De Witt!"

WEST POINT, *February 12th*, 1875.

FROM PROF. A. B. VAN ZANDT, D.D., THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, NEW BRUNSWICK, N. J.

I HAVE endeavored to recall my recollections of Dr. De Witt, to see if I could contribute anything of interest for your projected memorial. I should count it a great honor to have my name associated with his, even thus remotely. But I fear that I have nothing that would be suitable to your purpose. Our brief sojourn together in Holland, left a deep impression, which will always be cherished in grateful memory. But apart from the enjoyment of his personal intercourse in a strange land,

its incidents were chiefly the ordinary experiences of travel, which will not bear repetition. It is true, by this closer contact under unusual circumstances, I gained a better and higher estimate of his noble character, and learned to admire and reverence the man, even more than I had done before. But others, who have enjoyed his intimacy for many years, can portray his excellencies far better than I can.

There were, however, two occasions in Holland, when he made a public appearance, and acquitted himself with great *éclat* in the Dutch language. The one was at a meeting at the residence of the venerable Dr. Capadose, at the Hague, on Sabbath evening, to a large company assembled there, as was their custom, for social worship and the study of the Scriptures. Dr. De Witt spoke in Dutch for full half an hour, and what was the more striking, his discourse was chiefly expository. The people were amazed and gratified, and Dr. Capadose complimented the Doctor's Dutch as being more classic than his own.

The other occasion was yet more trying to his nerves and his vocabulary. He was accredited as a delegate from the "American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions," to the Netherlands Missionary Society. The annual meeting of this society was held in one of the largest churches in Rotterdam, and it was crowded to excess. The most distinguished men of Holland were present, and her pulpits and universities were largely represented. The Doctor would have been quite excusable if he had spoken in English, but his friends insisted that it should be in Dutch. Some of us who knew that he was more accustomed to read than to speak the language, were a little apprehensive of his faltering. But when once fairly under way, he rolled off the gutturals and the polysyllabic compounds very much as he used to do his vernacular in his own pulpit in

Fourth Street. There had been an elaborate sermon by a distinguished divine, and there were addresses after his, but the Doctor's speech was the event of the occasion. As nearly as I am able to recall the line of his remarks, he began with a modest expression of the gratification which he enjoyed in visiting the "Fatherland," and those scenes of historic interest, long familiar to his studies. He then made a graceful allusion to the missionary spirit of the Reformed Churches of Holland as manifested in the planting and care of our own Church in America. This led to some notice of the then present condition of our Church, and its missionary work in connection with the American Board. The operations of that Board were then stated at length, and the address closed with one of his impassioned exhortations and appeals for continued and enlarged efforts in this cause. The immense audience hung in breathless attention upon his words, and when he ceased speaking, there was an audible movement, as when a multitude suddenly seek relief in a change of position.

After visiting the chief points of interest in Holland, and a brief trip up the Rhine, we parted company, to meet again in London, at the session of the first "Evangelical Alliance." In the discussions of that convention, Dr. De Witt did not participate so largely as some others from this side of the water, but his opinions had quite as much influence in moulding the organization and shaping its movements.

A man of the Doctor's commanding presence would naturally attract the attention of strangers. But his peculiar manner and gait, as he swung himself along, apparently unconscious of his surroundings, would often cause persons to stop in the street and turn to look at him as he passed. But though seemingly absorbed in his own reflections, he was yet keenly observant of whatever was worthy of notice, and would often

startle his companions by the shrewdness and humor of his remarks. He could relish an innocent jest as well as another, and his raillery was only the more effective for the gravity and dignity of his demeanor. The simplicity of his character was that of utter guilelessness; but they greatly mistook the man who supposed him to be destitute of sagacity. The great kindness of his heart alone rendered him liable to imposition, and to guard his purse from the professional beggars which swarm in foreign cities, was one of the cares of his companions in travel.

To sum up my recollections in a single sentence, I could only say, what everybody who knew him knows already, that he was a nobleman of nature, adorned with the diadem of grace. No man in our church has ever left behind him a more enviable reputation, or deserved it better, than Dr. De Witt.

If these few hasty lines can be of any service to you, you are welcome to use them in any way you please. I only regret that I could not offer you something worthy of the theme.

New Brunswick, *Feb. 8th*, 1875.

FROM REV. HERVEY D. GANSE, PASTOR OF THE MADISON AVENUE REFORMED CHURCH, NEW YORK.

I find on the most thorough inventory of my memories and impressions concerning "dear Dr. De Witt," that he gave to his friends so much more occasion for love and veneration than for minute delineation or interesting recital, that it is hard to do justice to him on paper. When one has drawn a large and

sweeping outline of a guileless, gifted, spiritual man, preaching the Gospel in its most evangelical form of love to all saints and sinners, and with the eloquence that comes from an experienced heart, a fertile mind, and an unfaltering tongue, and illustrating his preaching with a blameless life and a wise and practical charity—when to this picture of his moral and spiritual part is added that of his imposing stature and magnificent head and face, his unstudied gesture and gait, his ringing voice, his absent air; and when to all this is added again the idea of his long life and the circumstances of honor and usefulness in which it was passed, the greater part of the impression which Dr. De Witt made upon his acquaintances and admirers has been described. The very brightest and best things do not require as long description as the faulty ones. By the time you have said that the sun is round, and bright, and warm, and high, and that it attracts all the planets, you have said more about the sun than you could say about many a mean and dangerous thing with ten times as many words. The better a man is, the easier it is to describe him and the harder to paint him. You can describe him in a word by calling him "a saint," but to paint him you must have idiosyncracies to work on; and human idiosyncracies are pretty sure to have a strain of depravity in them. And so I never knew a man whose character, and history as well, more evaded striking particularization than Dr. De Witt's; who gave his admirers so much to feel about and so little to tell about.

The first that I remember about him was the frequent repetition of his name by my parents, who had moved out of one of his congregations in Dutchess County into New York, when I was a child three years old. They spoke of him so much and with such enthusiastic affection, that I grew into my first intelligence, with *Mr.* De Witt, as they called him, for a great phenomenal

fact in the religious world, like the union of the States or a republican form of government in the political world. He was the ministerial office in ideal and in perfection—other ministers whom I heard of and saw, being remote and imperfect adumbrations of his completeness. This impression did not come from any disparagement of other men, but from an unaffected love and admiration of him, which left all common praise of others as far below it as a plain is below a mountain. His coming to New York, which took place when I was five years old, was so important a matter of household talk, that it has left the most definite impression on my memory. I even remember what neighbors were present when the news of his expected coming was announced by my parents. Yet the distance at which we were living from the North Church, the nearest of the collegiate churches, kept the family in Dr. Brodhead's church, to which it had become attached, until the opening of the Ninth Street Church as one of the collegiate churches, and the removal of Dr. Brodhead to the country opened the opportunity, which was gladly seized, of bringing back Dr. De Witt into our home as pastor. Dr. De Witt was about forty-five years old when, as a boy of fourteen, I began to hear him preach. Of the fluency, fervor, richness, imaginativeness, spirituality, eloquence of his preaching in those days, and for many subsequent years, I do not need to remind you. Nothing struck a hearer more than the absolute absence of self-consciousness and contrivance in his sermons. His voice, his attitude, his hands, his words, seemed to go where the *afflatus* put them. *He* seemed to have no more to do with the whole matter than though God had created him just then, in body and soul, that he might be the recipient and channel of that one communication. I have heard other preachers who seemed to be caught away by their theme. Yet there

has been with them all, the evident duality of the theme and the man whom it mastered for the time. Dr. De Witt, at his best, seemed to be Gospel truth and feeling incarnated; his very oddities of attitude and gesture being the proof that no common device of oratory was within his thought or knowledge. In this way a style of action, which all the professors would have utterly forbidden, became a hundred-fold more effective than their methods could ever have been. Just think of Dr. De Witt with the manner of a prim orator put on him! It would be like putting a square league of balm and spicery into a smelling-bottle. And his voice, of the management of which he *knew* no more than the wind knows about managing an Æolian harp, would range from that high tone of passionate declamation in which it rang almost like metal, down to that strange guttural resonance which betokened his deepest and tenderest feeling, when the substance of sobs seemed to transform itself into articulate speech. I never heard the same quality in another voice. It could never be imitated or learned. It was a kind of soul-speech, that could be uttered only by a magnificent voice overmastered and appropriated by magnificent feeling.

His memory was the subject of much comment and wonder in my father's family. It used be said that when he read his hymns his eyes would seldom be on his book; and his "preaching without notes" was thought to be proof of a singular power of arranging and remembering his thoughts. Neither of these matters seem so remarkable to me as they did in my boyhood. But his ability to store his mind with dates and figures, which he would give off without hesitation in long detail, was truly wonderful. Those who have heard his historical discourses on different occasions, will remember the surprise which these feats of memory have always renewed.

It has always been the fashion with his friends to tell wonderful stories concerning his absent-mindedness. But few men were less apt to forget what belonged to the essence of politeness and dignity. He was a thoughtful, courteous gentlemen, but drawn very large, with no time wasted on the person or the drapery.

With all his abstractedness, he was a shrewd observer; and while his habits of feeling brought him most into sympathy with good things, he could see the amusing side of a man or his acts, and good-humoredly paint it with a word. Those who knew him well, will remember the characteristic way in which he would lean toward them, and look them full in the eye as he delivered with a broad, boy-like smile the pleasant conceit which came over him.

No man was less exacting of formal attentions; yet his instinct of propriety and kindness could take notice of a discourtesy, and if need were, rebuke it. I have often heard my mother tell of a surprise, which, in his younger days, he gave to his congregation in the New Hackensack Church, when in the midst of a sermon, he stretched out his hand toward the gallery in front of him, and with a gesture appropriate to the words, said authoritatively, "Mr. T——, sit down." Mr. T. was the singing master, and when the service was over, he waited at the foot of the gallery staircase to remonstrate with the minister for calling attention to him in that peremptory way. But Mr. De Witt would not hear a word from him. "For several Sundays," he said, "you have done that same thing. It is disrespectful to the minister, and I will not suffer it any longer. You have deserved it all." It turned out that Mr. T. was in the habit of relieving the fatigue of the Sunday service by rising from his seat and sitting on the gallery-front, with his back toward the preacher. But that end-

ed the habit. Such a story of course could only belong to his earlier life. In his matured fame and character, he had such command of all men's respect, that he probably never dreamed of a personal discourtesy.

I could speak of some of Dr. De Witt's acts of liberal giving, of which I have had personal knowledge; but his name has been so often seen among those of the contributors to our Church Boards and institutions, that I need not touch that matter. His identification with all good causes as President, Director, Committeeman, or contributor, is also well understood.

But when all is said, it is as preacher, that Dr. De Witt has made his wide and lasting reputation. In the last years of his life, indeed, in which he preached but little, the new generation have known him chiefly by the regard which their seniors have paid to his venerable age and character. But this regard itself has been the living extension of that consideration which he first attracted by his wonderful pulpit gifts. Yet those gifts were of a sort that absolutely required pre-eminent piety to make them very available. Some pulpit triumphs suggest the idea of other fields in which the preacher might have secured equal, if not greater, attention. The trenchant logic, the elaborate style, the breadth and fullness of illustration, the cultivated oratory, could evidently have commanded great success in any direction. But imagine Dr. De Witt with any other work than that of preaching the Gospel! The wonder was, that a man of a temperament externally so cold and immoveable, could so easily be aroused to enthusiasm. But if the theme was Christ, redemption, sanctification, the uses of sorrow, triumph over death, eternal salvation; the preaching might proceed in the old Middle Church on a rainy, winter night, with twenty people, or five, scattered among the high-backed pews; and the preacher's soul would dilate, and

glow, and, soar, till it touched, as nearly as mortals ever do, all the limits of the Gospel.

It was always observed that any domestic sorrow wrought a direct effect upon the discourses which immediately followed it. It was his heart that preached; and it preached best when it had been preached to, and so had its word direct from God.

I have often heard Dr. De Witt express doubt whether his method of preparation, which threw him so largely upon the influences of the occasion, had been the best. For those grandest flights of his, which seemed more like New Testament prophesyings than like modern preaching, it was the only method. If it leaves no printed result, it leaves such an impression of the joy and profit of those vanished words as is better than most printed sermons, and perhaps is better even than would be the record of those very words with the life of tone, gesture, and fervor all taken out of them.

So I have run on, my dear friend, about him who has, all my life, been before me as the best embodiment of a "man of God." But there is a comfort in speaking warmly of those who both deserve warm words, and deserve them from us.

NEW YORK, *Feb. 2d*, 1875.

FROM REV. ABRAHAM MESSLER, D.D., OF SOMERVILLE, NEW JERSEY.

THE first time I saw Dr. De Witt, was in May, 1822, when he came to New Brunswick to attend the annual examination of the students of the Theological Seminary. I remember distinctly

how his countenance impressed me. His massive head, with an impending brow, and thoughtful, expressive eyes. He sat most of the time with his elbow on a table, leaning his chin on his hand, often smiling, as if some pleasant thought was passing through his mind. He was then a young man, and had been only a very few years settled in his first charge at Hopewell. I compared his personal appearance with the men by whom he was surrounded, and thought then how much their superior he looked to be. He seemed to me to be one of the strongest men, intellectually, I had ever seen. There was power in his presence.

His memory was still fresh and green in the Seminary, and many anecdotes were told of him. The students were obliged at that time to go to Millstone to recite their Hebrew to Rev. John M. Van Harlinger, and Dr. De Witt often walked out there, the distance being some six miles. On one occasion he was observed, with a stick in his hand, with which he tapped every post in the fence, as he passed it; he missed one, but returned and gave it a tap, and then started on, all the time, no doubt, conning the Hebrew Grammar, or thinking hard, it may be, of some perplexing theological problem which he had been studying.

The same entire self-absorption was often remarked of him while at Hopewell. One day, he had gone out to his pasture, to bring in his horse to drive or ride out to a lecture in the country, some miles from his residence. He caught the animal, put the bridle on his head, and putting the reins over his shoulder, proceeded toward the house; but when he came there, there was no horse attached to the other end of it. The animal had been cunning enough to slip his head out of it, and the good dominie, thinking all the time about his lecture, had never noticed what had occurred.

I have seen him in the streets of New York, passing on among the crowd, apparently thinking of no one, and noticing no one whom he passed, evidently in deep thought, and hardly conscious of where he was. The passengers seemed to know him, and avoided any collision with the absent man, as the only safe thing for them to do.

The same apparent absorption of thought and unconsciousness of surrounding objects, was manifest in his pulpit exercises. He preached extempore for the most part, and with his eyes closed during much of the time. Hence his gestures were expressive rather of what *he felt*, than of what he was endeavoring to make his hearers feel. They were not studied, had no rule, were not made to point and emphasize his discourse, but they broke out of his own intense emotion, as if he could not prevent them. He made them because he could not help making them in the excitement of his own mind, and feeling as he did at the moment. They had no rule, and were sometimes almost anything rather than graceful and appropriate, but they told how earnest he was in enforcing his theme.

As a preacher, Dr. De Witt's power was in his complete self-forgetfulness, and in the vast range and splendor of his imagination, and in the facility and grandeur of his improvisation. He rose habitually into the higher regions of eloquence, and not infrequently into the fervor and imaginativeness of the poet. He was best, usually, when he had some practical theme, embracing Christian experience. Then his heart would wake up, his religious affections become excited, and he often seemed to float away into regions far beyond our terrestrial sphere, to revel in unseen glories, as if the very gate of heaven had been opened to him. President Frelinghuysen once said to me, after removing to New York, and assuming the Chancellorship of the

University, "You cannot think how I enjoy the preaching! Dr. De Witt sometimes makes me jump." And then in estimating his power as an orator, and his intellectual stamina, he affirmed that he was superior to Daniel Webster; and if he had been trained as a lawyer and politician, he would, in his opinion, have been greater in the United States Senate than Webster ever was.

In his latter years, Dr. De Witt lamented that he had written so little, and preached so much from the impulse of the moment. "You gentlemen," said he, "who have written your sermons, have a store to fall back upon, but I am left almost without anything; and with failing memory, and diminished aptness of thought and sentiment, find the work of preaching well more difficult every day."

Dr. De Witt was a most generous, honorable, and noble man. I remember how, on one occasion, when cruelty and impropriety had been charged against an individual, he would burst forth and flame out in expressions of disapprobation, whenever the man's name was mentioned.

The last time I met the Doctor was in a social party at his daughter's in Philadelphia. A number of clergymen had been invited – most of them his friends. It was a happy meeting, and he enjoyed it to the fullest extent. The general talk, the happy expression of his countenance, his brilliant eye, and his hearty laugh, all bore witness to the pleasure he experienced in meeting with so many friends. He told his anecdotes, and passed around the parlors among the guests, animated, joyful, and delighted—indeed, a very happy man! I love to cherish that last social evening among my many treasured memories. I loved and honored the man, and feel now a pride in being able to say that he was my friend; and always as a friend among those most trusted!

We saw things generally in the same light and thought of our dear, honored Church, with the same fondness; and though in different spheres, we both labored earnestly for its prosperity!

SOMERVILLE, N. J., *Jan. 18th*, 1875.

FROM REV. WM. H. CAMPBELL, D.D., OF RUTGERS COLLEGE, NEW BRUNSWICK, N. J.

MY acquaintance with Dr. De Witt, which began more than forty years ago, soon ripened into a friendship which lasted till his death. During this long space of time, I have seen him in the joys and sorrows of his own home, and in the gladness and grief which the successes and failures of God's cause bring unto His people. And alike in all he was always the same. His religious convictions never wavered, his purposes were abiding, and his steadfast continuance in well-doing was still joined with the same child-like simplicity of character. Whenever I met him, or went to see him, his questions about the friends whom I had seen more lately than he, and the interest he showed in all that concerned them, proved him to be a true member of the body of Christ. He felt joy or sorrow as God's children had gladness or grief. None who knew him would ever charge him with selfishness. He showed his heart was large by the many it took in, and its especial tenderness by the affection he displayed for all who loved Christ, and took an interest in His kingdom. He loved most tenderly, and was most loyal to his own branch of the Church of Christ, but at the same time he had a most catholic

spirit, and loved all who bore the Saviour's image in their hearts. He was not insensible to evil done to him or spoken of him. Quite otherwise. I know two instances in which he felt deeply, and spoke decidedly of wrong doing, but his words of condemnation were so spoken and mellowed by the accents of love, that it would have been the easiest thing in the world for him to have closed his censures with the doing of some great act of kindness for the sinners.

Dr. De Witt was too modest and undemonstrative to speak much, or, indeed, to speak at all of his own religious experiences. I judge, therefore, rather from the general tenor of his conversation, than from any direct statement, that for many years he enjoyed an unshaken hope of an interest in Christ. His thoughts and feelings seemed to be always circling around the cross of Christ. That was a centre from which he was never far distant. And his even cheerfulness seemed to show that the Master never left him without the sensible tokens of His presence. I have known many who spoke more about their nearness to Christ and their spiritual enjoyments; but I have never seen one in whom I thought I saw so many and so strongly marked features of a filial spirit—the spirit of a son of God. And now when he has departed, the remembrance of his child-like dutifulness to our Father in Heaven, kindles in me a quickening of desire to follow him, because I am sure that he was seeking to walk in the very footsteps of Christ.

New Brunswick, *Feb. 23d*, 1875.

FROM PRESIDENT HOPKINS.

My dear Mrs J.:—It was as a young man, and a stranger in New York, that I first heard your father preach. The impression made upon me was peculiar, and I despair of conveying it to others. The reason is that that impression was so much from personal qualities that were distinctive, and that could be appreciated only as they were immediately known.

I may say, however, that in producing that impression, one element was his person. That was massive and commanding. It was in keeping with the large churches in which he preached, and the large audiences he addressed.

Another element was his movements. These were entirely unstudied, and conformed to no rules of art. He seemed to be swayed by his subject, and often to be so rapt in it, as to be oblivious of time and place. After giving a magnificent sermon, I remember he would sometimes, in reading the last line of the last hymn, turn round and utter it with great force directly against the back of the pulpit. This was done with such evident unconsciousness as not to produce an unpleasing effect.

A third element was the structure of his sentences. I have heard no speaker who could evolve sentences of similar length. In uttering these he would gradually rise in his delivery as the sentence progressed, and the effect was like that produced by watching one who makes a perilous ascent. You sympathize with him as he goes up, and wonder how he is to get down.

These elements were effective, but would have availed little if his discourses had not been pervaded by that subtle and indescribable thing called genius. The sermons not being written, flashes of this would seem to come as by inspiration, and so

would awaken surprise. But these were only by the way, so that, in hearing him, you were like a person passing through a region where unexpected and pleasing views are constantly meeting you, at the same time that you do not feel that you have gone out of the way for the sake of them.

With these elements there was connected, and with no touch of rigidity or sternness, the earnestness and solemnity that became a minister of Christ; so that, without knowing him at all personally till many years afterwards, I felt for him an affectionate reverence that nothing short of transparent goodness, connected with intellectual power and with beauty of character, could inspire.

You have my best wishes in seeking to perpetuate an influence that can be only for good.

Cordially yours.

WASHINGTON, *April* 22, 1875.

VARIOUS TRIBUTES.

LETTER FROM THE REV. WM. S. PLUMER, D.D.

Two days before Dr. De Witt died, a telegram was received from Dr. Plumer in reply to a letter announcing the serious illness of his life-long friend. The dispatch was simply this: "Because I live, ye shall live also."

The letter here given followed as speedily as possible.

Expecting in a few hours to start for Mississippi on business, deemed by my brethren important to the good of Zion, I have a letter stating that on the 13th inst. my venerable and long-tried friend, Rev. Dr. De Witt, is ill, and nigh unto death. Speaking of his burial, he said, "I should love to have Dr. Plumer here, but it is too much to ask of him." No! great and modest man, it is not asking too much. If my duty did permit, my heart would surely take me there to weep with those who weep for a father, friend, and pastor taken, and to rejoice with those who rejoice in the blessed hope of a glorious immortality beyond the grave, not only for Dr. De Witt, but for all who have like precious faith.

Should Dr. De Witt, contrary to the fears of his friends, linger till my return from the West, I will promptly obey any summons to his bed-side, or to his funeral. But my expectation is that I shall see his face no more in the flesh.

I was allowed to make an address at the funeral of his and my old friend, Rev. C. C. Cuyler, D.D., of blessed memory. I was permitted to preach a sermon on the occasion of the death of dear Julia Plumer De Witt, the youngest daughter of Dr. De Witt.

Last autumn I attended the funeral of his lovely and ex-

cellent wife. Well do I remember how he then said it would not be long before he should join her in a better world.

My estimate of Dr. De Witt's character and worth was well expressed by the late Dr. James Alexander, in these words: "Taken all in all, no living man has a more desirable and deserved standing in the Church of God than Dr. Thomas De Witt."

Till we meet around the throne above, farewell, thou blessed servant of the Most High God. Sing on, sing on forever the song of redemption, the everlasting song, which, yet to eternity, shall be the *new* song; the song of sinners washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. Glory be to God for the hopes of heaven. "The Lamb is the light thereof."

COLUMBIA, S. C., *May* 15, 1875.

FROM THE REV. JOHN DE WITT.

MY DEAR MRS. J——:—Your letter containing the announcement of your dear father's death came to hand this morning. I had heard from Mrs. S—— several days before, the same (I hardly dare say) sad news, and purposed writing you the moment I came to this place. And now that I am here, I hardly know what to say, except that next to my own father, I loved, and honored, and revered him more than any man I have known. What a well-rounded life his was! In his day, the most popular, and more than that, deservedly the most popular of pulpit orators, he yielded his place more gracefully than any one I have ever heard of. I have heard my father say that he

has seen him in the pulpit when he seemed like a Hebrew prophet, lost to everything around him, and wrapt in the contemplation of a divine vision he was interpreting.

What a great thing it was to live so far above the little envy, and jealousy, and suspicion which torment the lives of most of us. And then, with no doubts to impair the vigor of his faith, and no forebodings to dim the glory of his great hope of the life to come! The more I think of him, the more thankful I am that I knew him, and the more proud of our name. It is best that he died suddenly, no doubt. A long and painful illness does not become, to our view, a life so well lived as his was. The more nearly like a translation, the more befitting a career like his who "walked with God, and was not, for God took him." You and I may well make the prayer which constitutes the motto of Boston, our own, "*Deus sit nobis, sicut patribus.*" Let God be with us, as he was with the fathers.

I received K.'s letter telling me of it the day before I left the middle of England for the lake district. You know, perhaps, how some impressive announcement associates itself with scenes amid which one feels its impression. At any rate, it was so with me. I walked about Lake Windermere, thinking of him and of his life, when suddenly the lake itself seemed the most fitting symbol of what he was, and how he lived; lying calm and clear, looking up to the great mountains surrounding it, and receiving into its bosom from them the streams which it sent forth again to bless the plains below it. So he lived, quietly, but always looking upward to heights above him, and above us all, transparent as the lake—always receptive—always outgiving to us who lived far, far below him. Dr. Adams once said to me (I think it was soon after father's death), "So long as my parents lived, I did not feel how fast the years were slipping from

me; but when they were gone, I began to realize that what had appeared a barrier between me and death was gone; that there was no generation between me and the grave."

Perhaps you have had the same feeling since your father's death. Well, there is this compensating thought, common enough, but as true as it is common, that if such a death makes the prospect of death coming to us more vivid, it also makes the thought of heaven more like the thought of home. May God comfort you with this reflection, and with "His manifest presence."

FROM S. B. S. B.

"I COUNT it as one of the privileges of my life to have known such a man as Dr. De Witt, and one of its honors to have enjoyed such measure of his personal regard as was accorded me, and was proved by many acts of kindness, chief among which, and never to be forgotten, was his wonderfully touching, and sympathizing, and most eloquent prayer at the funeral of my wife. How gifted he was in *that* ministry.

How excellent were the eulogies at his own funeral, and how did our hearts respond to their justice. How magnificent was that head, and how stately that robed form, on which the many hundreds gazed for the last time. I repeat, that I never knew a man for whom I had a higher reverence, and in a forty years' ministry among different denominations, I have known many great and venerable men. You have good reason to cherish and honor the memory of such a father. It will be a life-long joy that you were permitted to nourish and minister to the patriarch of Christ so assiduously and affection-

ately in his declining days. Well might he have said as his Master did, 'Daughters, weep not for me, but for yourselves.'

"How much better thus to die in the full strength of his intellect and heart, though at so advanced an age, than to linger on, a conscious or unconscious burden to oneself, and a care to friends."

From "The Christian Intelligencer."

THE REV. DR. THOMAS DE WITT died at his residence in Ninth Street, in this city, on Monday morning last, May 18th. The death of no minister of our Church has ever awakened an interest more profound and tender than that which follows this announcement. It may well be doubted whether even the father of our denomination, as Dr. Livingston has naturally been called, held a larger place in the affection and reverence of all its members than has been conceded for the last thirty or forty years to Dr. De Witt. This distinguished place, besides, may be said to have been held by him not only without a partner, but without a competitor. Some, indeed, have equalled him in general learning, and others in piety, and others in some forms of eloquence. But there has been no other man among us during this last generation in whom all the elements of a minister's greatness have met as they have in him.

The substantial material of this greatness—the marble out of which all the noble contour was cut—was unquestionably his moral character. Many another man with exactly his measure of ability would have claimed distinction for genius. But Dr. De Witt, even in the days when his fervid and imaginative ora-

tory drew crowds of listeners, exacted but little praise for mere intellectual power. And for this good reason: It was the heart that made him eloquent and not only the head. A great glowing soul, filled up with the love of Christ, and thus with all transcendent thoughts about Christ, took possession of his tongue; and his speech was a tide of Gospel truth set on fire with Gospel feeling. Only those whose memories can go back thirty or forty years to the days of his prime, can understand the enthusiasm which his preaching awakened. His grand form and magnificent head have been with us till now; but the picture which they used to make in his erect and vigorous manhood, while his ringing voice and intense and characteristic gesture interpreted the ecstasy of his swelling, soaring, half-unconscious spirit—that comes back from by-gone days, the reminder of an eloquence which we get from no other lips.

It was the same moral quality that distinguished his whole life. Transparent piety toward God, and guilelessness toward men, made a character which, while it was as marked and individual as any among us, commanded the veneration of the whole community. The recent years, which have diminished so largely his power for public service, have not lessened his hold upon the public heart. Indeed, the special sympathy that was lately attracted to him by the loss of his beloved and devoted wife, has been specially repaid by that exhibition of resignation and cheerful Christian hope which have fairly put the crown upon his beautiful earthly life. His real and heavenly crown his Master will put upon him in "that day."

From "The New York Observer."

ONE of the most venerable, beloved, and distinguished ministers in our city has left us for his eternal rest. The Rev. Thomas De Witt, D.D., senior pastor of the Collegiate Reformed Dutch Church, died on Monday, May 18th, in the eighty-third year of his age.

He came to his charge in this city in the year 1827, and here he has stood up for more than forty years as one of the pillars of the church militant; a man of faith, of learning, and of power; a model of all the virtues that adorn the Christian, the minister, and the man, wielding a silent influence for good that is the fruit of years of unblemished repute and constant well-doing, and closing a long and honored life of usefulness with a peaceful and happy death in the Lord whom he loved and served.

Dr. De Witt was a man of sound judgment, of calm, equable temperament, of strong opinions, and of incorruptible integrity. Well read in the Scriptures and in the learning of the religious schools, he was an able teacher and preacher of the Gospel, and in early and middle-life, and down to old age, he commanded the attention of the public as one of the great leaders of Christian thought and action in this city and country.

Identified with the old Knickerbockers of New York, he took an active interest in its history, especially as related to the Dutch fathers of the town, and for many years he was Vice-President and then President of the New York Historical Society, a regular attendant upon its meetings and zealously assisting in its objects. He was one of the founders and most able supporters of many of the great religious and philanthropic institutions of the Church and the country. The American Bible, Tract, Colo-

nization, and Sunday-school Societies, the Boards of the Church, and every wise scheme of doing good, found in Dr. De Witt a friend whose name was a tower of strength, and whose judgment was regarded at all times with the highest confidence and respect. Dr. De Witt was a man of prayer. Eminently gifted, his voice led great assemblies with fervor to the throne of divine grace. His heart and mind were in heaven. He lived above the world. His beloved wife was called away but a few months ago, and his affections have been drawn more and more toward the city where she had gone to be with Christ. He has now entered into rest, leaving a name long to be revered in the Church on earth, an example of faith and constancy and faithful service of the Master, that is a precious legacy to his children and to the world.

From "The Sower and Gospel Field."

It has pleased God to call from our earthly fellowship in the ripeness of years, after a long life of holy service, this venerable and beloved man of God. There is no little sadness in the departure from us of such men as he, who have always held our confidence as teachers, leaders, examples in faith. We cry sorrowfully after them as we see them going, "My Father, my Father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof." We know that there are none left to take their places. Whatever God may make us, of fewer years and slenderer growth, to our generation, there are none left to be to us what they have been. In this aspect their loss is not to be repaired. And yet it would be unworthy of us, and irreverent to Him who gave them, not to

recall with devout satisfaction, notwithstanding our keen sense of loss, their holy lives, their characteristic faith, their lofty integrity, their courageous purpose, their pure and patient testimony, their good and faithful service, and to thank God that having served Him and their generation by His will, they have gone to their grave as a shock of corn cometh in ripe in his season, and that taken from us, full of years and full of honor, they link us afresh to the General Assembly and Church of the First-born who are written in heaven.

Such a thought is especially appropriate in the remembrance of the venerable father in God who has just been taken from our earthly fellowship. No man among us enjoyed a purer and more widely-spread confidence and affection, and no man deserved it better. Of excellent endowments and good culture, serene in temper, of characteristic fervor, of translucent purity and lofty faith, full of days, and far beyond his three-score years and ten, having been in the eyes of all the people Christ's faithful soldier and servant, he has fitly held the esteem and reverence not only of all who belong to our own household of faith, but of all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. In the church of his fathers no man was held in higher estimation, and to this he was entitled not less by his eminent position as senior minister of her most ancient congregation, than by his eminent excellence of heart and life. He did not affect the reputation of a polemic, nor was he called to the sturdy work of a reformer, but his lips were to the last eloquent for Christ, and his hand was ready for every good work.

How completely our venerable father has been identified with our own ecclesiastical history will appear from a brief sketch of his life and ministry.

The Rev. Dr. Thomas De Witt was born at Kingston, Ulster

County, N. Y., on the 13th of September, A.D. 1791. He was graduated at Union College, Schenectady, N. Y., in July, 1808. He studied theology at the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Dutch Church at New Brunswick, N. J., where he was graduated in 1812. He was licensed to preach the Gospel by the Classis of New Brunswick, in June of the same year. He was ordained to the holy ministry in November, 1812, and installed minister of the united congregations of Hopewell and New Hackensack, in Dutchess County, N. Y. He was called to the Collegiate Reformed Dutch Church in the city of New York, and installed as one of the ministers of that church in September, 1827, in which position he laid down his life and ministry on the morning of the 18th day of May, 1874.

The length of the ministry of this venerable servant of God has been, therefore, sixty-two years, and his pastorate of the church in whose service he died, forty-seven years. There is recognized in the ministry among us no official pre-eminence, but the eminence of true worth and faithful service is fully recognized, and to this our father had by universal judgment acceded. The seniority among the ministers of the Collegiate Church is moreover always noticed with honor, and this position Dr. De Witt held for many years before his decease. He has been known and revered among us for his unusually long and faithful ministry, for his high Christian culture, for his ripe wisdom, and his symmetrical Christian character. His earlier and more vigorous days are remembered for the fervent eloquence that used to carry his audience before it with the force of a torrent, and that, indifferent to grace of gesture or restrictions of rhetoric, used to send them away "with their hearts quivering like the strings of a harp swept by the hands of a master." For more than half a century he has stood in the very front rank of the ministers of the great com-

mercial metropolis of the nation, holding the respect and confidence of all men up to his very last hour on earth.

In his own ecclesiastical connection he has been the object of reverent affection. His name stands at the head of the roll of graduates from the Theological Seminary of our Church. The Reformed Church of the Netherlands planted missions and churches in this country at a very early date. The island of Manhattan was discovered by Hendrick Hudson in 1609. The first traders came from Holland in 1612. At once religious services were established, and a church was organized in 1619. For more than a century the Reformed Dutch Churches in this country continued in immediate dependence on the Church in Holland. No ministers were educated here: none were ordained. After vehement controversy, the right to ordain was conceded by the mother-church, and the complete independent existence of the Reformed Dutch Church in this country was secured in 1771. But the right to educate and ordain her own ministry had scarcely come into her hands when the war of the Revolution threw everything into utter confusion. After the war, a professor of theology was chosen, the venerable Dr. John Henry Livingston, to whose efforts mainly, under God, the independent organization of the church in 1771 was due. This office he held along with his pastorate of the church in New York. Eventually he retired from the pastorate, and retained the professorship. In October, 1810, he formally opened the Theological Seminary at New Brunswick, N. J. The first class consisted of five students; of these Dr. De Witt was one, and he was the last survivor. This fact has a peculiar interest to the ministry and the people of the Reformed Dutch Church. Dr. De Witt remained among us a vital link between the most eventful crisis in the history of our Church and its later history. He was a bond of union be-

tween us and the fathers who long ago preceded us. His name is associated, moreover, with the beginning of the later advance and prosperity of our Church. In every effort to further that prosperity for more than half a century he has borne a distinguished part. After the decease, in 1818, of Dr. John Schureman, who had shared with Dr. Livingston the charge of the Theological Seminary of the Church, the professorship of Oriental Literature and Ecclesiastical History in that institution was proffered to Dr. De Witt. This honorable and influential position, which he was eminently fitted to hold, he felt constrained to decline, but in the Board of Superintendents of the Seminary he did long and faithful service. For more than thirty years he was a trustee of Rutgers College, New Brunswick. He was likewise a trustee of Columbia College, New York; and from its early history was a member of the Council of the University of the City of New York. His name is recorded among the founders of the Board of Education of the Reformed Dutch Church, and a scholarship founded by his munificent gift bears the name and perpetuates the memory of his beloved son. Of the Board of Publication of our Church, he was one of the earliest supporters, and has been to the last its steadfast friend; for many years he was its honored president. In the missionary effort of our church he has rendered the best of service. The Reformed Dutch Church has ever cherished a missionary spirit. As early as the year 1643, its ministers undertook missionary labors among the Indians. In this good work they anticipated the labors of the apostolic Eliot. With characteristic Christian kindness, in the colonial period, they sheltered the Jesuit and Recollet fathers, who had been driven from Canada by the murderous cruelty of the savage Iroquois. The Rev. Mr. Freeman, minister of the Church in Schenectady, about 1700, translated into Indian

the morning and evening prayers of the Reformed Dutch Liturgy, the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, and a considerable part both of the Old and New Testaments. These translations were printed in New York about the year 1713. In the latter part of the same century the Reformed Dutch Church united with other evangelical bodies in forming the New York Missionary Society; and in the Northern part of the State, co-operated in the formation of the Northern Missionary Society. In the year 1816, the Presbyterians, Associate Reformed, and Reformed Dutch Churches united in forming the United Missionary Society. Ten years afterwards this Society was merged in the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. In January, 1822, the Missionary Society of the Reformed Dutch Church was organized. Its specific work was domestic missions. In 1832, the general synod of our Church constituted the Board of Foreign Missions. Of this Board Dr. De Witt was for many years the corresponding secretary, and with unabated interest, wise in counsel, and efficient in service, he remained in its membership, being at the time of his death its honored president.

Probably no minister of the Reformed Dutch Church has been more familiar with its history and literature than Dr. De Witt. His mastery of the Dutch language made its treasures of historic record accessible to him. No part of the Reformed Church has a grander and nobler history than this Church of ours. None has in her day achieved more superbly for human kind. She had her birth in that struggle of eighty years' duration, in which the men in the Netherlands, a stubborn mass of defenceless traders, breasted the fearful power of the tyrant of Spain, and the cruel machinations of the bigot of Rome, and came out of the eventful agony a free Church in a free State. The world had never seen the like before. But the shadow on that human

dial has never gone backward. Civil freedom, it was at last demonstrated, there could not be where there was not freedom of faith. Every vantage gained for the latter was just so much gained for the former. The heart of this gigantic struggle, protracted through three generations, under the silent William and his heroic son Maurice, proved to be faith in that Christ revealed in the Gospel. The Martyr Church that called herself "The Church of Jesus in the Netherlands sitting under the cross," came forth from her baptism of blood, leading by the hand the United States of Holland. And from this Antioch, liberty in law for human kind started on its grand missionary career. The superb history of this eventful struggle has been opened from the side of civil freedom by Motley, to the admiration of the world. It remains that it be depicted from the side of religious freedom by some worthy annalist—such, we had fondly hoped, that our venerable father, as we know he could, would have been. With that wonderful, eventful history, we know that no man was more familiar. His treasures of research were vast, and many sketches of great interest remain to us from his pen. But he did not turn aside from the work of preaching Christ, to which he was appointed, and the history is as yet unwritten.

But who will complain of this that remember him in his fervor of eloquent pleadings for Christ? In the rapturous kindlings of his soul, ere yet the decrepitude of age had come upon him; in the passion of holy truth that poured from his lips in a very lava of burning eloquence, what multitudes have been won to the cross; what multitudes have been comforted; what multitudes have been strengthened and covered as with armor of proof against evil; what multitudes have ripened for glory. In those grand days of his prophetic power, he was oblivious of rhetorical rules and artificial modes, but he swayed with amazing

power the hearts of men. And when, through physical weakness under the pressure of years, this was no longer possible, still he lingered among us, loving and beloved, with the halo of pure and precious goodness about him, kept by the grace of God to show to the men of another generation in his beautiful and honored old age the kindness and love of God, effluent to the last with wise and winsome holiness. His home was made sweet with true and trusty love, and in his repeated and sore bereavements he was held up and made to prove the sanctifying power of his Father's chastenings. When his preaching days were over, he dwelt among his children and his children's children, practicing the truth of which he had made, in his strength, the preaching to be fully known, until calmly, and without a struggle, he resigned his spirit to the hands of Him that gave it. A good name is better than precious ointment. Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write: Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord from henceforth. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them." "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me on my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father on His throne."

A. R. T.

From "The World," New York.

In that superb collection of stained glass in the old church at Gouda, in Holland, there is one pane which bears the great and honored name of De Witt. It has its high place in the history of the Netherlands. The good old man, who, in the exalted

duties of a clergyman, has just concluded an unstained life of eighty-three years, has honored that old name in the metropolis —in all our land. I do not know who has gathered at the funeral ceremonies—how large, how distinguished the crowd, but I do know that beyond all other men, who in later years have in New York held this highest of all trusts, the ministration of the highest truths, around Dr. De Witt's coffin should have stood as mourners all the clergymen of the metropolis. I would except none. Well might Archbishop McCloskey have summoned all his ecclesiastics. Well might Bishop Potter have invited all his ministry. I would have had all representative leaders to have urged their followers and associates to gather as devout men did around eminent saints of old. Here was the last of earth to a man who had worn the armor of a Christian soldier through every battle of life, scarred only with his Christian duty—a man of eloquence, of culture, of skill in the histories of sacred and secular affairs—a grave, dignified, old-fashioned clergyman, master of pulpit skill, master of the great power of a Christian life, living to be useful, dying to be of blessed memory.

It is now ever so many years since that now faded and forlorn old building, the present post-office, gave up forever its uses as the Middle Dutch Church. It had long annals of colonial and revolutionary and opening State life. Royal Governor, English soldiery, colonial officials, republicans, armed and peaceable, had been around it. It heard in the language of the Holland colonists the grand truths of all the ages. At last it died to sacred uses. It could only be reached on the quiet Sabbath by a long down-town walk, and the Consistory surrendered it to the purposes of the government. I hope they felt like children saying farewell to their aged mother. When the last service came, and the congregation, in whose gathering on that occasion old memo-

ries were pre-eminent, stood to listen to that which is, whenever and wherever given, a treasure of possession—the blessing—Dr. De Witt uttered it in the Holland language. The old walls, had they been sentient, would have been vocal with loud amens.

Early in life Thomas De Witt attained celebrity as a preacher. His praise was in all the churches of that body of Christians whose order of public worship had come down from the days when in the Netherlands it held high place—when, indeed, even to this day, it revives to us the very traditions of our fathers.

In those days the pulpits of the Collegiate Reformed Dutch Church of New York City were, with Trinity, the very Canterburys of American rank in church station. To be called there was, indeed, to be honored. Dr. De Witt had been preaching at Fishkill. The reputation of his ability reached the metropolis, and the elders and deacons of the great church summoned him to their service. He had the good sense to heed their call to a greater field of usefulness. He came, and fully did he fill their hope and his promise. Ever since that hour, growing into larger action with the advance into religious and literary thought and benevolent action of this great capital — whether with stately Governor Bradish in the sessions of the Historical Society, or with grave Dr. Dix in the counsels of the Leake and Watts Orphan House, or in the conclave of his ministerial associates, or in the nearer and dearer intimacies of Christian counsel—perhaps now evolving the sacred mysteries of some hidden truth, now telling in the old tongue to some aged disciple the simple story of the Cross, coming closer to the heart to which it was addressed by the awakened memories of childhood, whether in the glory of his eloquent sermon or the tender fervor of his prayer—Thomas De Witt compassed the dignity and the gentleness of his

grand office. He moved among us the recognized ambassador of heaven.

Perhaps in later years it was effaced by greater carefulness, but at one period of his life, absent-minded to a ludicrous degree, social circles were stirred to a smile by the familiar incidents of the manner in which the inner man seemed to forget the outer. Of many a pleasant absurdity there was talk over the tea-cup—but—all this did not efface the hope of the young girl, radiant in the pure illumination of her bridal day, that "dear old Dr. De Witt and no one else, no, indeed," should utter the words that formed to her the irrevocable bond, nor did it weaken the hope of the aged that when their last hour should be in its darkness, that venerable pastor of their souls should soften their farewell with his deep libation of Christian tenderness. So he lived and labored—scholar, leader, teacher, faithful friend. The great metropolis is to-day inexpressibly poorer by such a man's death.

When the St. Nicholas Society poured out its elegance of hospitality in honor of the President soldier, their distinguished guest, Dr. De Witt was also at their table. Of the traditions and ways and lingerings among us of the mother-land, where his name is so lofty in history, he was custodian. To him the language of Grotius was yet a spoken one in New York.

But not in that did he win his high mark as a preacher. He held mastery in our own tongue, and the record of the power and beauty in which he conveyed the great lessons of his embassage are the cherished possessions of the Church. Even now there comes to my remembrance a sentence which floated out in his description of a sorrowing, sinful being: "His heart melted in penitence and poured itself out in tears." Everywhere he was that benediction to the world in which he moved—a holy man.

When in Christian fellowship he knelt at the communion rail in old Trinity—when he stood, senior and emeritus, among his own clergy—everywhere the old saint blended his life with his doctrines. Let our city's history give his career bright page.

From "The New York Evangelist."

It is but a few months since Dr. Spring was borne to his honored grave, and now we are called to follow another, who, like him, was universally revered. Rev. Thomas De Witt, D.D., fell asleep on Monday, at the age of eighty-three years, for nearly sixty of which he has served his Master in the ministry of the Gospel. He was the oldest pastor in this city; and preserving in advanced age a rare personal dignity, he walked among us as a patriarch, while all around looked up to him with affectionate veneration.

Dr. De Witt, we believe, was a native of this State; being, as his name indicates, a descendant of the early Dutch settlers, whose traditions he preserved, and whose language he spoke with such fluency that he often preached to a congregation of Hollanders in this city. His whole ministerial life was passed in that church which inherited the ancestral faith and name. When a young man, he was settled in Dutchess County, from which he was called to the Collegiate Church in this city, the most important position in the whole body, in which he remained till his death. In the early part of his ministry, he was associated with Drs. Brownlee and Knox, who both passed away many years since; and later with Drs. Vermilye, Chambers, Ormiston, and Ludlow, who still remain. As a pastor of this ancient and

wealthy congregation, he occupied a position which of itself drew upon him public attention, and which he made more conspicuous by his own marked ability. When he rose in the pulpit, his personal appearance attracted attention. He was a man of large frame and commanding presence, with a deep, rich voice, and from the first moment fixed the attention of his audience. In those days he was regarded as one of the first pulpit orators in the country. This personal influence was increased by the beauty of his private life. No man ever preserved more unstained the dignity of the ministerial character. He was literally without reproach, and his blameless life and active benevolence secured respect for the religion which he represented as well as for himself.

Besides being pastor of the leading Dutch Reformed Church in this city, he occupied many public positions, which showed the universal respect and confidence with which he was regarded. He was an officer in the Bible and Tract and Colonization Societies, and was for some years President of the Historical Society, in whose researches he took a deep interest. It was always a pleasant sight to see that grand old man on one of our platforms, and to hear his deep voice in fervent prayer.

It is with a feeling of personal bereavement that we record the passing away of this venerable man; for, although our relations were not intimate, yet no one could come into his presence without having drawn out towards him a feeling of affection, as well as of respect. There was such a gentleness and courtesy united with his natural dignity—he was always so kind towards his younger brethren, that while they revered him as a patriarch, they loved him as a father. We have not many such men among us, and when one falls like an oak in the forest, we feel that the world is poorer for his being gone. But he leaves behind him

what cannot die—the legacy to his children and to the world of a noble Christian life, the memory of his virtues, and the influence of his example.

From "The Standard," Amsterdam.

Rev. M. Cohen Stuart, D.D., wrote an elaborate article on Dr. De Witt, in the *Zondagsblad Van de Standaard*, from which the following is extracted :

Dr. Stuart, after having spoken in the highest terms on the noble character of Dr. De Witt, draws a parallel between him and no less a personage than the well-known, highly esteemed, and celebrated Merle d'Aubigné. "Their similarity," said Dr. Stuart, "was so striking, that he could never look at our venerable father Dr. De Witt, without being reminded of Merle d'Aubigné. Both he describes as patriarchs and pillars of the Christian Church; and both are known in a wide circle as the church fathers of the present century. Both had much that belonged only to themselves, and yet possessed many things in common. Was the one mighty with the pen, the other was so much more born for the pulpit and the platform.

"Both distinguished themselves in grandeur and formality, which nevertheless, by neither of them, bore the least character of affectation or unnaturalness. If d'Aubigné was more loquacious and of a more genial appearance, De Witt, as a man of uncommon stature and erectness of posture, even in his advanced age, possessed a visage expressing the deepest piety and most

dignified earnestness. Neither of them could show themselves, even to such who never had seen them before, without awakening attention and inspiring reverence."

And not to continue the exact parallel much longer, Dr. Stuart said, as a word of true homage to the memory of Dr. De Witt, "that our venerable father not only bore the name of the most celebrated man of our history, but has borne it with honor and glory, and added unto it the crown of the highest Christian nobility of America." Dr. Stuart interested his Dutch readers not less with a copy of the biographical outline of the character of Dr. De Witt, by Rev. J. M. Ludlow, D.D., and stated further that to learn to know Dr. De Witt was one of the greatest among the many never-to-be-forgotten blessings he was permitted to enjoy in his travels through America. He also alluded to Dr. De Witt's remarkable knowledge of the Dutch language, his memorizing capacity, and fresh remembrance of Groen Van Prinstesee, Da Costa, Capadoce, and other Christian gentlemen of the Netherlands. He referred to the singularly composed, calm, and submissive Christian faith of Dr. De Witt in his saddest affliction, as was manifested at the funeral service of Mrs. De Witt; when, after many of the friends had spoken the most touching words to the blessed memory of the departed wife and mother, the aged Dr. De Witt rose, and bowing over the open grave, said with deep emotion, "Farewell, faithful and beloved wife! the tie that joined us is broken. Thou art now with Jesus in glory. He is with me through His grace. I come quickly to thee; farewell!" He came quickly. The Lord was with him unto the end of his life; a beautiful life was crowned with a beautiful death; his upright, blameless life hath had a serene and peaceful end.

Wrote Professor Schaff to Dr. Stuart, "He has gone out—

"'As fades the Summer cloud away,
As sinks the gale when storms are o'er,
As gently shuts the eye of day.
As dies the wave along the shore.'"

And then our dear brother Stuart closed his well-said article with the following beautiful remarks: "Thomas De Witt shall continue to live in honor in America, but we Hollanders have reason to thank God that the old Holland stem has so worthily been represented elsewhere. He has honored our name and memory in a strange land; may his name never be forgotten in the Netherlands."

A. H. BECHTHOLD,
Pastor of the Holland Church.

RESOLUTIONS OF SOCIETIES

AND

INSTITUTIONS OF LEARNING.

RESOLUTIONS.

THE REFORMED PROTESTANT DUTCH CHURCH OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK, IN CONSISTORY MAY 19, 1874.

THE President announced that Rev. Thomas De Witt, D.D., the senior pastor of this Church, died yesterday morning at twenty minutes before eleven o'clock; whereupon it was RESOLVED, that a committee be appointed to prepare a minute, and recommend such course of action as might be proper in the premises. Rev. Drs. Ormiston and Ludlow, and Elders Sturgis, Clarkson, Demarest, and Wood, were appointed the Committee, who then retired, and after consultation, returned, and reported the following resolutions and minute, which were adopted:

Resolved, That a committee of six be appointed to make all proper arrangements for the funeral, and that they consult with the family of the deceased, and fully carry out their wishes as to the details and order of the funeral.

Messrs. G. G. Smith, Locke, Clarkson, Bookstaver, Graham, and Van Arsdale, were appointed as such Committee.

Resolved, That this Consistory, the Ministers, Elders, and Deacons, attend the funeral as mourners, and wear the usual badge of mourning.

Resolved, That we meet in the Consistory Room in the Middle Church, on the day of the funeral, Thursday next, at one o'clock P. M., and proceed in a body to the house to join the procession.

Resolved, That the Church Masters drape in mourning the pulpits of Churches and Mission Chapels, and such other parts thereof as they may think proper.

Resolved, That the expenses of Dr. De Witt's funeral be borne by the Consistory, and that the Treasurer pay the same.

Resolved, That the following minute in reference to the decease of the senior pastor be placed upon the record of the Consistory, viz.:

The Consistory reverently recognize the hand of God in the removal of their venerable, revered, and greatly beloved senior pastor, and gratefully desire to express their devout thanksgivings to the Great Head of the Church for sparing so long a life, so valued and so dear to them.

For nearly half a century has he ably, faithfully, and acceptably performed the duties of a pastor in this Church, during which he won the hearts of our fathers as he lived in our own. His form was dear to every eye, and his memory will be sacred in all our hearts.

The Rev. Dr. Thomas De Witt was installed as a pastor of the Collegiate Church on the 16th of September, 1827, and till 1872, discharged all the duties of an active pastorate, and continued till within a few days of his departure to take part in the public services of the sanctuary and to visit members of the congregation. He was truly a man of God, an example to his flock, and an able minister of the Gospel of Christ. His piety was sincere and unobtrusive, profound and heartfelt, consistent and often joyous; a piety of principle, early instilled and sedulously cultivated. His deportment was characterized by a dignified plainness, a noble simplicity, and an unsophisticated sincerity, which rendered it impossible for him to appear other than he was. His daily walk was worthy of his vocation as a child of God, a servant of the Lord. As a preacher he was endowed with rare gifts, which he consecrated wholly to his life-work. His discourses, often thrillingly eloquent, were always impressive and instructive, replete with sound sentiment, just criticism, and apt illustration.

As a pastor, he was gentle and tender, wise and discriminating, full of kindness and sympathy. In the chamber of suffering and in the house of mourning, he was ever a welcome, as he was a frequent visitor, and to many a grieving heart, he was a "son of consolation." Since the lamented death of Dr. John Knox, in 1858, he has been the Senior Colleague, and by all his fellow-laborers revered as a patriarch and beloved as a father.

He took a deep interest not only in what pertained to the prosperity of the Collegiate congregations, but in all that concerned the weal of the Reformed Dutch Church in this country, or affected the progress of the

kingdom of Christ in the world. He has been long associated with many institutions, religious, benevolent, and literary, in which he held prominent positions of honor and trust, and which he aided alike by his counsels and his influence.

In all the relations of life, private and public, he was most exemplary for thorough conscientiousness and inflexible integrity. So great were the simplicity of his character and the spotlessness of his conduct, that not even the breath of calumny ever dimmed the lustre of his reputation during the tenor of a protracted public life.

His long, useful, honored, and fully rounded life was crowned with a peaceful, hopeful, triumphant death. He literally fell asleep in Jesus on the forenoon of Monday, 18th inst. He rests from his labors, and his works will follow him. The Consistory sincerely sympathize with the bereaved family (they, too, deeply feel their loss), and tenderly greet them in terms of Christian condolence and joyous hope, assuring them that they will ever gratefully and lovingly cherish the memory of their sainted father, and will fervently pray that the blessings of their father's God may ever rest upon them and theirs till the latest generation.

Resolved, That our senior pastor, Rev. Dr. Vermilye, be requested to preach a memorial sermon on the occasion, in each of our churches at his earliest convenience.

[Extract from the minutes.]

GEO. S. STITT, *Clerk.*

MAY 19, 1874.

THE CLASSIS OF NEW YORK.

AT a meeting of the Classis of New York, held May 21st, 1874, the following paper was adopted:

The Classis has received with great grief the announcement of the death of the Rev. Dr. Thomas De Witt, our senior member, after a ministry of sixty-two years, and a pastorate in the Collegiate Church, and a connection with this Classis of forty-seven years.

Dr. De Witt was of pure Dutch descent on his father's side, and on his

mother's of the French Huguenots; a lineage of happy combination in both elements of which, intelligence, integrity, independence, and earnest piety have been conspicuous; nor can either race boast of a nobler scion than our deceased father.

He was naturally of a sedate, grave disposition, and early gave evidence of humble and sincere piety. After graduating at an early age at Union College, with distinguished honor, his attention was directed to the Gospel Ministry as his life-work. His studies with this object were conducted at first at Schraalenburg, by Dr. Freighly, then Synod's Professor of Theology. But when Dr. Livingston assumed the Professorship in the Seminary at New Brunswick, he went thither, and was one of the first there who graduated from that Seminary in 1812. In the same year he was licensed to preach by the Classis of New Brunswick; and in the autumn of the same year was ordained and settled in the united charge of Hopewell and New Hackensack. There he pursued a faithful and useful ministry, tenderly beloved by the people of his charge, until 1827, when he accepted a call twice tendered to him by the Collegiate Church, to become one of its pastors, in which connection he continued until his decease.

He was a man of goodly person and dignified presence, of large scope of mind, well imbued with theology, learned in history, particularly in that pertaining to Holland, and the early Dutch and Huguenot settlements in this country. He was singularly modest, very discreet in his intercourse with his fellow-men, attracting unlimited respect and confidence by his calmness, candor, and sound judgment. He was firmly attached to his mother church, in whose communion and ministry his whole life was passed. But it was an attachment without narrowness or bigotry, as his paternal "*God speed*" to all of every denomination who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and his cordial co-operation with the various Christian societies which characterize our age, fully attest.

As a preacher he was copiously endowed, free, fluent, and his sermons and public addresses were at times surpassingly eloquent. In a good old age he has been gathered to his fathers, after a short illness, and without a struggle; leaving a record which the whole Church may contemplate with gratitude to Him who raised him up, and so richly furnished him for his great work. Therefore,

Resolved, That while we bow with submission under this bereavement, we render humble thanks to God for His goodness to His servant during

his long life; for the gifts and graces with which He endowed him; and for the godly example and useful ministry He enabled him to maintain.

Resolved, That this paper be entered in full upon the Minutes of Classis; and that the Classis in a body will now attend the funeral services.

Resolved, That the Stated Clerk have this record engrossed and presented to the family of our deceased father, signed by the President and Stated Clerk.

WM. DE HART, *Stated Clerk, pro tem.*

RESOLUTIONS OF THE BOARD OF SUPERINTENDENTS OF THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF THE REFORMED CHURCH.

WHEREAS, It has pleased the Almighty Disposer of human events to spare our beloved brother, the Rev. Thomas De Witt, D.D., to reach an advanced age in the ministry of the Gospel, and in the active service of the Church of Christ, and then to grant him a happy deliverance from protracted suffering in the article of death; therefore,

Resolved, That it becomes us, the Board of Superintendents of the Theological Seminary, to express our devout thanks to his God and our God, for the bestowment of so great a gift upon that branch of the Church with which we are connected, as we have realized in the life of faith, activity, and efficiency now closed so happily upon the earth, both to our sorrow and to our joy.

Resolved, That in the removal of our brother, while we bow in submission to the will of our Heavenly Father, we recognize a great loss to the denomination of the Church of Christ with which he was always connected, in which with undeviating exactitude he has pursued the "path of the just which shineth more and more to the perfect day," and to which he has successfully devoted rare talents as a preacher of the everlasting Gospel, exerting a wide and commanding influence for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ and the enlargement of the Reformed Church, to whose denominational interests and peculiarities he was ardently attached, in perfect consistency with that

enlightened zeal and enlarged liberality that deservedly endeared him to every Christian heart, and whose praise is in all the churches.

Resolved, Since our departed brother was a member of the first class (1812), graduated from this Seminary, to whose interests he was ever after attached, for whose prosperity he has given a long and valuable co-operation, often acting as a member of this Board, we regard it due to his memory to record our sense of obligation to him, as well as our gratitude to God for the well-directed labors, the eminent piety, the sound learning and practical usefulness of our departed brother, whose works shall follow him to the praise of the grace of God, as they have abounded in his illustrative life.

Resolved, That we tender our sympathy to the bereaved family connections of the deceased, and to the church so long favored with the faithful ministrations of our brother, reminding them that this grief admits of mutual alleviation; while we express our hope that all of his associates and brethren in the ministry may be as well prepared to render their respective accounts to the Master.

Resolved, That these resolutions be recorded on the Minutes of this Board, and be published in the *Sower and Gospel Field*, and in the *Christian Intelligencer*.

Respectfully submitted,

W. R. GORDON, *Chairman.*

HERTZOG HALL, NEW BURNSWICK,
May 20th, 1874.

RESOLUTIONS OF THE BOARD OF PUBLICATION.

The Board of Publication have received with profound sorrow the announcement of the decease of the venerable and beloved Dr. Thomas De Witt. From the beginning of our existence as a Board of the Church he has been a faithful friend and a cordial helper in our work. For a long time he has held the office of our president. His devoted loyalty to our ancestral Church, his wise counsel, his cheerful encouragement, made

him of inestimable value to us, and his departure from us leaves a void which it will not be possible to fill. We are thankful to God that his precious life has been so long spared to us. We cherish the fragrant memory of his good name and blessed work for Christ, and we pray that by the grace of God we may be enabled to follow him as he followed the Lord. The Board desire to express their deep sympathy with his household in their great bereavement, and direct that a copy of this minute be entered on the records of the Board, and a duly authenticated copy be sent to his family and be published in the *Sower*, and the Board of Publication will attend in a body his funeral.

J. A. LANSING, *Cor. Sec.*

NEW YORK, *May 19th*, 1874.

AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY.

At a meeting of Managers of the Board of the American Bible Society, June 14th, 1874, the following memorial paper was unanimously adopted:

The Board of Managers of the American Bible Society are called to mourn the loss of the Rev. Thomas De Witt, D.D., who departed this life May 18th, 1874, at his late residence in this city. His long association with this Institution as Chairman of the Committee on Agencies, from the date of its organization in 1846, until his resignation on account of age and infirmity in 1873, his wise counsels and faithful attendance at the meetings of this Board, and his eloquent pleadings in the pulpit and on anniversary occasions, have established large claims upon our grateful memories of this venerable co-laborer in the work of this Society. Many years ago, in company with the late Secretary, the Rev. Dr. Brigham, Dr. De Witt visited the South, and by his public addresses and judicious influences, rendered great service to the cause. Standing in the next rank to the founders of this Institution, and associated with most of them in its earliest work, he has for nearly half a century been among its leading spirits. He loved the Word of God in its fullness, and proclaimed its

saving truths and its pure moralities with intense ardor and characteristic faithfulness. In the broad and catholic plans of this Society for the translation and circulation of the Holy Scriptures, he always manifested intelligent zeal and active generosity. His heart was aglow with its spirit, and his hands were ready for every good work. Dr. De Witt was born at Twaalfskill, near Kingston, Ulster County, N. Y., Sept. 13th, 1791, his father being of pure Holland descent, and his mother of the French Huguenot stock. His father, who was an officer in the army of the Revolution, gave him a good education, and at an early age "he gave himself to the Lord in a covenant never to be broken." Graduating at Union College, in 1808, with distinguished honor, and from the Seminary at New Brunswick, N. J., in the first class which was sent forth from that oldest theological institution in our country, under the care of the revered Dr. Livingston, in 1812, Dr. De Witt settled as pastor of the United Reformed Dutch Churches of Hopewell and New Hackensack, Dutchess Co., N. Y., at the early age of twenty-one. After fourteen years of active service, he accepted the call, which he had once declined, to the Collegiate Dutch Church in this city in 1827; having for his associate ministers at that time the Rev. Drs. Kuypers, Knox, and Brownlee. In this eminent position, he remained forty-seven years, until his decease, "beloved for his works sake," "approved in Christ." Dr. De Witt was truly a representative man, not only in the church of his fathers, but in the whole circle of Christian churches and charities, and other important institutions of this city. Blameless in his work, decided in his opinions and character, and entirely devoted to his vocation as a Christian preacher and pastor, he commanded the unqualified respect of all who knew him. His noble presence and child-like simplicity of manner, his non-affected humility and sterling common-sense, with his candor and pious fervor, were the attractions of his vigorous manhood, and the graces of his sweet old age. Beautifully has Providence fulfilled in him that patriarchal promise, "Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season." After a ministry of sixty-two years, and a life of more than fourscore and two years, he sleeps in Jesus. In happy memory of our departed father and helper, this Board of Managers hereby record their humble submission to the will of God, who has taken His aged servant so peacefully to Himself, and their heartfelt sympathy with the bereaved relatives. And it is therefore

Resolved, That this memorial be entered upon the minutes of the Board

and published in the *Bible Society Record*, and that a certified copy of the same be sent to the family of the deceased.

[From the minutes.]

A. L. TAYLER, *Recording Sec,*

New York City Mission.

In a meeting of the New York City Mission and Tract Society, held this day, the following minute was adopted:

In the death of the Rev. Thomas De Witt, D.D., the City Mission and Tract Society has lost its beloved and esteemed President, who was its warm and steadfast friend through all its history, and who presided over all its meetings for the last twenty-eight years.

This Society was first instituted in 1827, the same year in which Dr. De Witt was installed pastor in the Collegiate Church, a coincidence to which he after adverted with interest.

It is matter of devout thankfulness that one in whom all denominations of Christians reposed such entire confidence, and who always and everywhere received such a large share of reverence and affection, should have been spared so long to give us the benefit of his rich experience and judicious advice, and consistent example.

In this, as in many other religious and benevolent associations which enjoyed Dr. De Witt's active aid and zealous co-operation, his influence was always esteemed and valued as that of a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith. His upright, blameless life had a serene and peaceful end.

> "As fades a summer cloud away,
> As sinks the gale when storms are o'er,
> As gently shuts the eye of day,
> As dies the wave upon the shore."

He has come to an honored grave in full age, like a shock of corn cometh in in his season.

The members of this Society, while they mourn their loss, plainly hear

a voice from heaven, saying: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth yea: saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them."

Attest. L. E. JACKSON, *Secretary.*

MAY 21, 1874.

AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK.

When the American Tract Society was formed, May, 1825, and many doubted whether Christians of different denominations could unite in a Tract Society which would be virtually a comment on the Bible, the speakers publicly advocating the union, were the President, S. V. S. Wilder, Esq., Dr. Justin Edwards, Secretary of the Tract Society at Boston, Bishop McIlvaine, Rev. Mr. Summerfield, and Rev. Dr. De Witt, then pastor in Fishkill.

Dr. De Witt's speech is preserved, and is as able, compact, and yet generous and confiding an address as is perhaps anywhere to be found. It closes with the beautiful and affecting words which Milton represents Adam as addressing to Eve, after they had wearied themselves with mutual complaints and accusations of each other:

> "But rise, let us no more contend, nor blame
> Each other, blamed enough elsewhere; but strive
> In offices of love, how we may lighten
> Each other's burden, in our share of woe."

In 1835, Dr. De Witt, Dr. William R. Williams, and Dr. Cutler were a committee to award four premiums of fifty dollars each for the four best short tracts that should be written, by which a number of excellent tracts were secured.

In 1856, he acted on the honored committee of fifteen, to whom was referred the question of the duty of the Society as to issuing tracts on the curse of slavery.

In 1858, he was elected a member of the Society's Publishing Committee, in place of Rev. Dr. Knox, deceased, and, from 1861, was the beloved

and revered Chairman, both of the Society's Publishing and Executive Committees, cheering the Society year by year at its anniversaries, by gratifying statements of its prosperity and usefulness.

W. A. H.

NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

At a stated meeting of the New York Historical Society, held in its Hall on Tuesday evening, October 6th, 1874, the Rev. Thomas E. Vermilye, D.D., LL.D., read a memorial of the Rev. Thomas De Witt, D.D., prepared at the request of the Executive Committee.

Upon its conclusion, the following resolutions, submitted by Mr. George H. Moore, were adopted unanimously, viz.:

Resolved, That this Society has received with much profound sensibility the announcement of the death of its late President, the Rev. Thomas De Witt, D.D., and renews the record of grateful appreciation with which it recalls the memory of his long, continued, and valuable labors in its service, and, as it then followed him into his retirement with loving remembrance and the earnest hope that he might long live to enjoy a full measure of that repose to which his age and faithful public services so richly entitled him, so now, when he sleeps with his fathers, it cherishes his memory with affectionate and lasting regard.

Resolved, That a copy of these proceedings be communicated to the family of the deceased.

[Extract from the minutes.]

ANDREW WARNER, *Recording Sec'y.*

The School of the Collegiate Dutch Church.

At a special meeting of the Board of Trustees of the school of the Collegiate Dutch Church, held this day, the following preamble and resolutions were unanimously adopted:

Whereas, God in His providence has called to his rest our venerable and esteemed pastor, Rev. Thomas De Witt, D.D.; therefore, be it

Resolved, That in his decease this school has lost a warm and steadfast friend, who had endeared himself to its scholars by his earnest prayers in their behalf and by his just and fatherly counsels.

Resolved, That we sincerely and affectionately sympathize with his bereaved family in this dispensation of Providence, which has deprived them of a venerated father, this school of an earnest well-wisher, and our ancient church of one of its most faithful servants, whose meat and drink it was to do his Master's will, who by his life exemplified the doctrines which he taught, and in his death has shown us that the end of the upright man is peace.

Resolved, That out of respect to his memory and of regard for his Christian worth, that the school be closed on the day of his funeral, and that the anniversary exercises be postponed; and that this Board and the teachers of the school attend his funeral in a body.

Resolved, That these resolutions be communicated to the family of the deceased, and published in the *Christian Intelligencer*.

JOHN C. CALHOUN, *Chairman*.

New York, *May* 19, 1874. ALEXIS A. JULIEN. *Secretary*.

At the meeting of the Trustees of Rutgers College, held at New Brunswick, October 6, 1874, the following resolutions were adopted:

Resolved, That in the death of the Rev. Dr. Thomas De Witt the Trustees of Rutgers College have experienced a great loss. For forty-four

years a trustee, he was always a wise counsellor, a faithful friend, a liberal donor to the College. Loving the church of his fathers with a warmth and purity of affection that was truly beautiful, he loved all its institutions. For the College his love knew no change but that of increase. He shared in all its sorrows and rejoiced in all its joys. Another may occupy his place, but for us, at least, who labored with him in sorrow and joy, in fear and hope, it can never be filled.

Resolved, That as a mark of our high regard the place in the Board made vacant by his death will not be filled for one year.

Resolved, That we tender to the children of the deceased our sympathy in their bereavement, but rejoicing most of all that God gave them a father worthy of their warmest love and closest imitation.

WILLIAM H. CAMPBELL,
GUSTAVUS ABEEL,
BENJAMIN C. TAYLOR, } *Committee.*

(*A true copy.*) DAVID D. DEMAREST, *Secretary.*

NEW BRUNSWICK, *October* 6, 1874.

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

The following resolutions were passed at the late meeting of the Alumni Association of the Theological Seminary at New Brunswick:

Resolved, That this Association has heard, with profound sorrow, of the decease of the Rev. Dr. Thomas De Witt, the last of the first class of graduates from this Seminary, after its establishment at New Brunswick.

Resolved, That while we mourn as for a father in the gospel whom we have lost, we record our high sense of his worth as a man of God, blameless in his manner of life; in walk and conversation an example to all his brethren; faithful and eloquent as a preacher of the Gospel; kind and gentle as a pastor; wise as a counsellor; ready for every good word and work; loyal to every denominational interest; full of charity to Christians

of every name, and ready to co-operate in every work for the promotion of the kingdom of God.

Resolved, That a copy of these resolutions be sent to the family of the deceased, and that they be published in the *Christian Intelligencer* and *The Sower*.

JOHN L. SEE, *Secretary*.

Board of Foreign Missions.

At a regular meeting of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Church, held June 18th, the following minute was adopted:

Whereas, It has pleased God our Heavenly Father to take from our earthly fellowship our venerated and beloved father, Thomas De Witt, D.D., the Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Church in America desire to put on record their sense of his precious worth, his holy devotion, his sound wisdom, and his lifelong fidelity to the foreign missionary work of our Church. His membership of this Board dates from its organization in 1832. For many years of the more active period of his life he filled the office of its Corresponding Secretary. During the later years of his life he was its honored President. The remembrance of his pure life, devoted to Christ in the work of His Church, will linger with us so long as the power of memory remains. We bless God that He spared to us His faithful servant so long, and when He took him away it was as a shock of corn cometh in its season. And we humbly pray that the power of his example in faith and holiness, and a double portion of his spirit may rest upon us.

Resolved, That this minute, properly authenticated, be entered on the record of the Board, be published in *The Sower and Gospel Field* and *Christian Intelligencer*, and be transmitted to the family of Dr. De Witt.

A. R. THOMPSON, }
C. L. WELLS, } *Committee.*

THE CONSISTORY OF THE REFORMED CHURCH, HOPEWELL, N. Y.

At a meeting of the Consistory of the Reformed Church of Hopewell, N. Y., held May 24, 1874, the following action was taken upon the announcement of the death of the Rev. Thomas De Witt, D.D.:

WHEREAS, It has pleased the Great Head of the Church to remove from the lower to the upper temple, the venerable and honored father who for many years ministered to this people in the Gospel of the blessed God;

WHEREAS, It is befitting this occasion of sorrow that we should place upon the records of our church some tribute of respect and affection to the memory of him who, giving to it the prime of his manhood and the first fruits of his great ingathering, served it so long and so well; therefore,

Resolved, That with devout gratitude we recall the cherished memories of his faithful pastorate of fifteen years over our church, and the evidence written in our records and upon the hearts of many of the living, showing that the blessing of the Master crowned his labors.

Resolved, That we bear testimony to the deep reverence and affection in which, after an absence of nearly fifty years, his memory is still held by our people.

Resolved, That we return thanksgiving to God for the noble testimony and eminent services of his long ministry, which, though begun here, and ever continued in the church of his fathers, belong to the Church Universal.

GRAHAM TAYLOR, *President*.
G. W. EVANS, *Clerk*.

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